WORLDSBK PREVIEW

40-PAGE GUIDE!

- EVERY RIDER, EVERY TEAM, EVERY CLASS, EVERY RACE!
- REMY GARDNER INTERVIEW + THREE WSSP AUSSIES
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+

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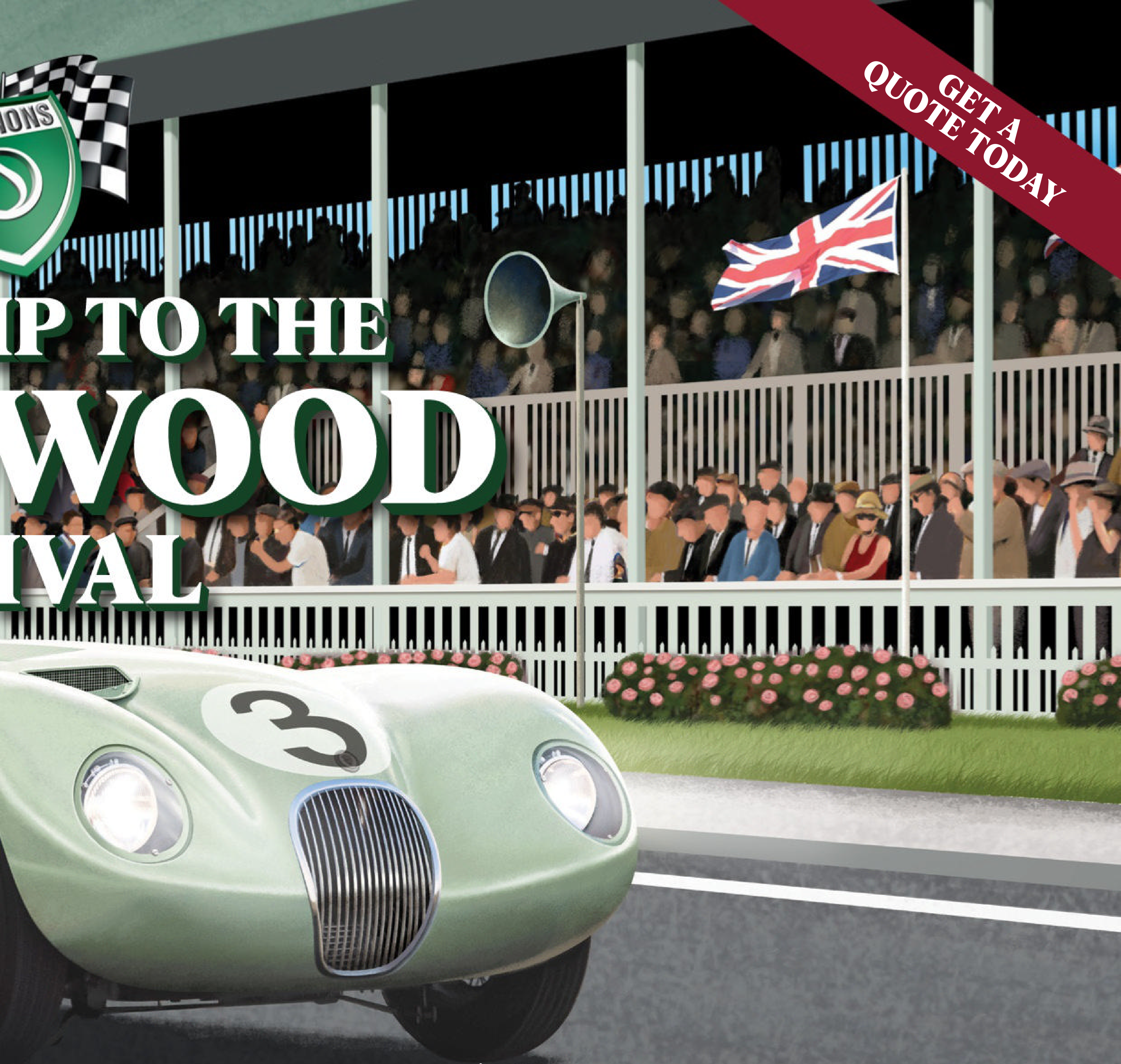

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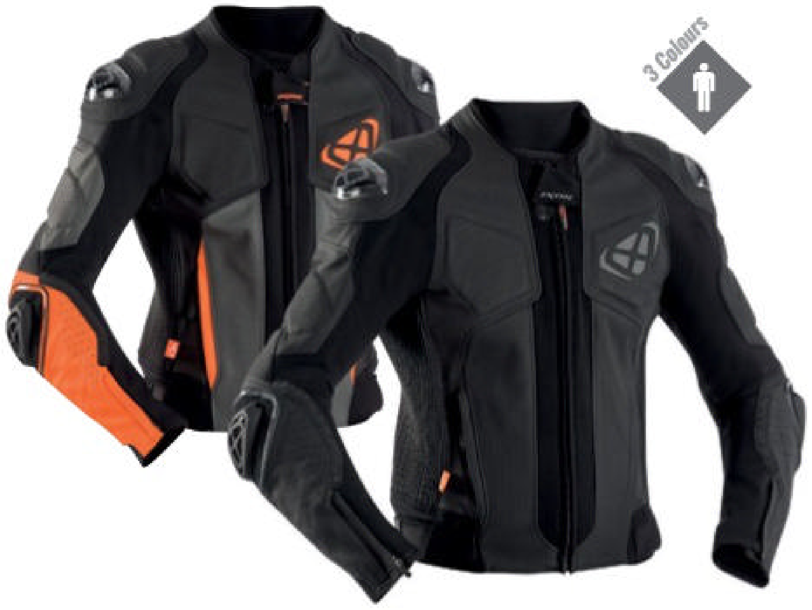

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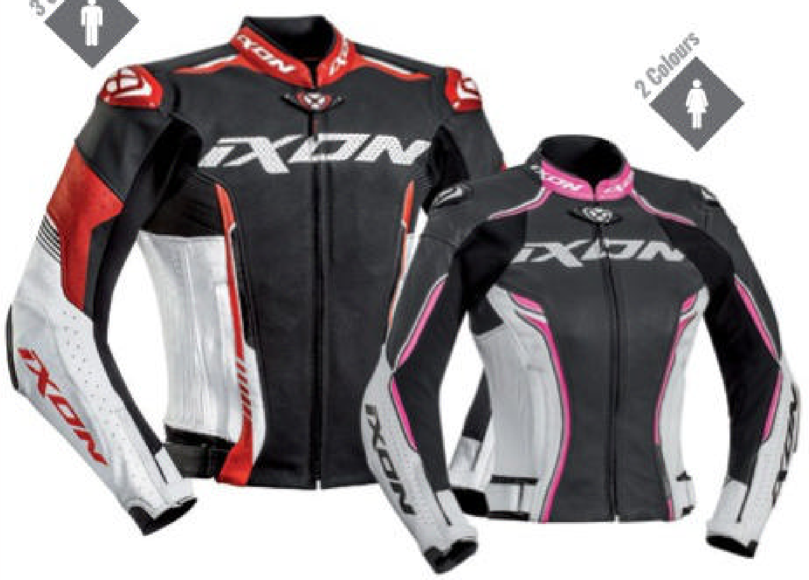

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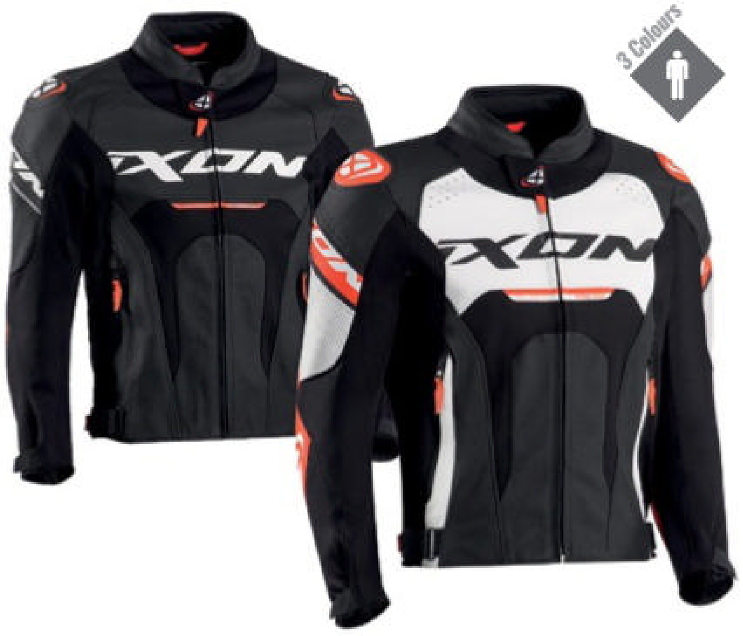

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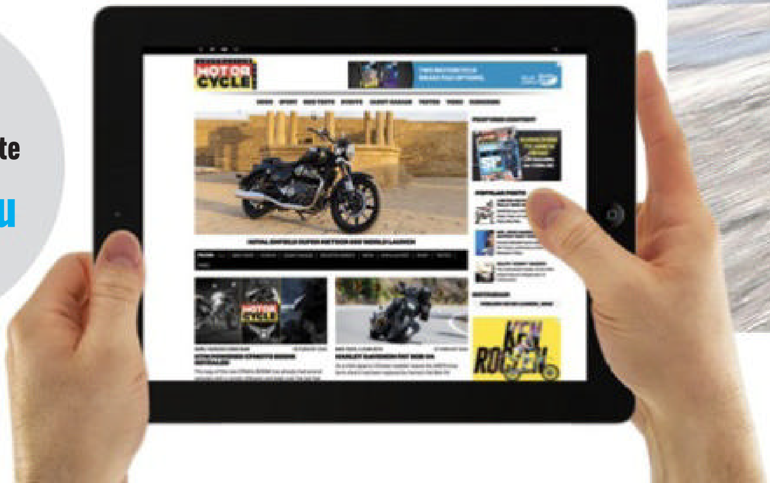

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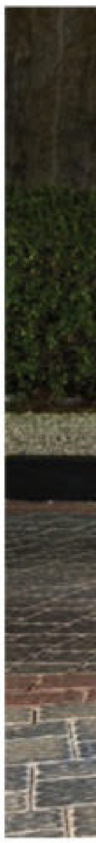
2023 WORLDSBK PREVIEW



COVER STORY

TO THE FOUR!

In every metric, Ducati's power cruiser has now gone to the next level in V4 guise

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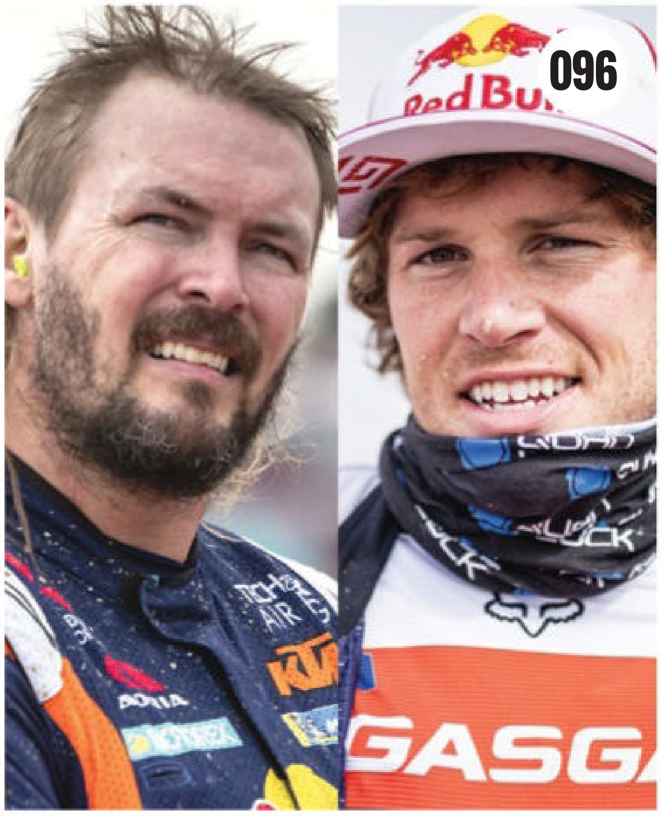

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ED'S DESK. DEAN MELLOR

> "I SERIOUSLY THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO COME A CROPPER, BUT THE DIAVEL REGAINED ITS COMPOSURE"

WHEN DUCATI launched the original Diavel back in 2011 I could hardly wait to get a taste of what many were describing as the world's first performance cruiser. Not only did it pack more power than any other cruiser I had ridden to date, but it was also purported to have a chassis that would allow it to carve up corners in spite of its 240-section rear tyre.

Not long after its local launch, I got to ride the Diavel on a familar piece of tarmac when I was out on a photoshoot with other AMCN staffers including then-Sport Editor Rennie Scaysbrook. Rennie had just finished a stint on the Diavel when it was my turn. I threw a leg over the still-idling beast and pointed it down the twisty section of road that the photographer was shooting on.

I got the bloody fright of my life as a I crested the first rise before the descent. With throttle wide open, the 240mm-wide Pirelli started to spin up and send the rear-end sideways. How could this be? Rennie had just told me how awesome the Diavel's traction control was. But what he hadn't told me was that he had switched it off! I seriously thought I was going to come a cropper, but somehow the Diavel regained its composure much quicker than I did, and I gingerly continued down the hill, heart in mouth.

Like that first Diavel, I'm really looking forward to a ride on the new V4 model that Adam Child has sampled for this issue. Before I jump aboard this time, I'll be sure check the settings.

The other big theme for this issue is the return of WorldSBK to Phillip Island for the 2023 season opener, just a few short months after last year's season-ending round. We have all the info you need whether you'll be visiting PI in person or sitting back at home and watching the action on the telly.

As well previewing the upcoming WorldSBK season, our expert Gordo has had a chat with Aussie racers Remy Gardner, Oli Bayliss and Luke Power, while for those who like to reminisce, Mark Fattore has penned a fabulous feature on the first WorldSBK round to take place at the Island back in 1990, when Aussies Rob Phillis, Peter Goddard, Malcolm Campbell and others showed the international contenders the way around the fast and flowing circuit.

On another note, we also scored a chat with Australian Dakar competitors Toby Price and Daniel Sanders, as well as Ducati MotoGP teammates Pecco Bagnaia and Enea Bastianini.

It's a jam-packed issue; we hope you enjoy it.

Deano

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INLINE FOUR!

KAWASAKI ZX-4R COMING TO OZ!

It's back to the 90s as the 400cc four-cylinder makes a return to showrooms

With electric bikes the focus of much R&D now, the chances of a 400cc four-cylinder revival might have seemed vanishingly small, but Kawasaki has launched exactly such a bike in the form of the ZX-4R. In fact, there are three variants – the ZX-4R, ZX-4R SE and ZX-4RR – and they're coming to the Australian market.

The bikes are based on the existing ZX-25R, sold in some Asian markets since 2020 and the only 250cc four-cylinder bike from a major manufacturer in years. With 35kW (47hp), the 250 was already an impressive machine, although its relatively hefty 180kg wet weight blunts performance, but by punching the bore from 50mm to 57mm and upping the stroke from 31.8mm to 39.1mm Kawasaki has added 150cc to the mix to create a 399cc four-cylinder with an impressive 57kW (76hp) on tap and a redline of 16,000rpm. Add ram-air to the mix, and power rises to 59kW (79hp) at speed. For comparison, an old ZXR400 would top out at around 45kW (60hp).

The new Kawasaki four-cylinder benefits from fuel injection and ride-by-wire, as well as two power modes, traction control and a slipper clutch. A quickshifter is optional on the base model and standard on the SE and RR. The SE also gets a tinted screen and KRT paintwork, while adding preload adjustment to its Showa SFF-BP fork. The track-oriented RR has the higher-spec fork and adds a Showa BFRC-lite rear shock to the mix.

The chassis comes straight from the ZX-25R, which means it's a steel trellis rather than the alloy beam frame 400cc sportsbikes enjoyed 30 years ago. A wider 160-section rear tyre and dual 290mm front discs where the 250cc bike has a single stopper are the only noticeable changes, but digging deeper into the specs also reveals a steeper 23.5-degree head angle (24.2 degrees for the 250). The wheelbase is the same as the 250 at a short 1380mm, and weight rises by only 8kg to 188kg for the R and RR, while the SE is 189kg. Those numbers include a 15-litre tank of fuel.

When it comes to pricing, the ZX-4R is likely to be closer to a ZX-6R than to the twin-cylinder Ninja 400. In the USA, only the RR model has been released so far, and it costs $US9699 ($A13,984) compared to $US10,699 ($A15,425) for a ZX-6R in that market. Australian documents show that both the ZX-4R and ZX-4RR are type-approved here, and when AMCN contacted Kawasaki Australia for comment, a press release announcing the models was quickly distributed by the firm, albeit with pricing still to be confirmed.

BEN PURVIS

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

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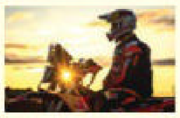
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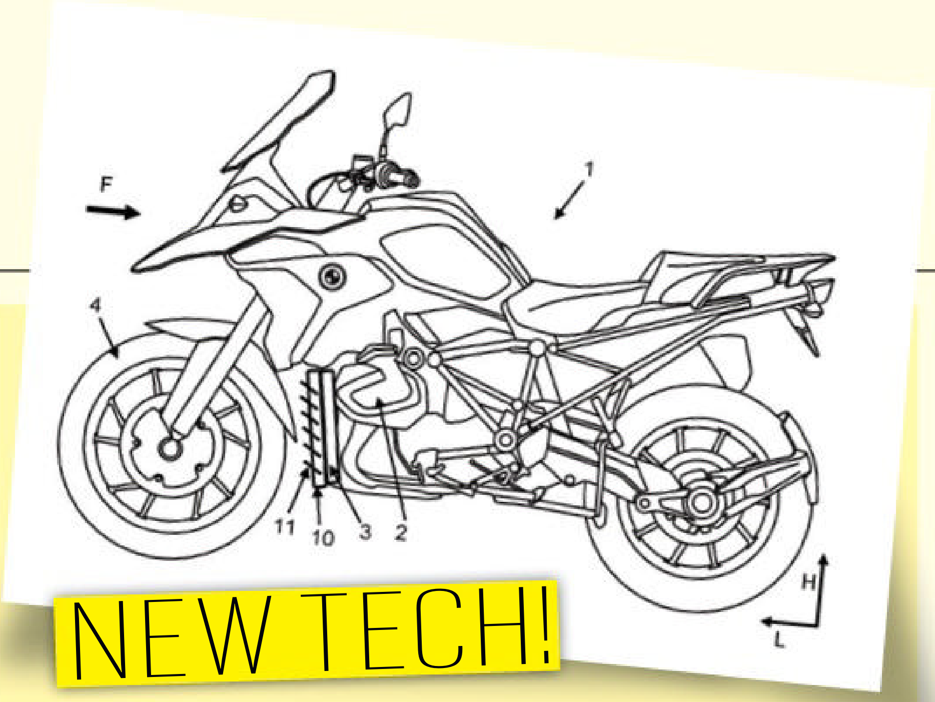
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NEW TECH!

BMW'S VARIABLE RADIATOR

BMW HAS filed patents for a variable radiator for bikes, an idea it has adopted on the grilles of its cars. Radiator grilles that can open or close, either manually or automatically, depending on cooling requirements are actually an old idea: planes have used them since well before WW2 and they also appeared on some pre-war cars. The idea has made a comeback on modern cars, largely as a way to improve aerodynamic efficiency, and the same thinking is behind a new patent application for a variable cooling system for BMW motorcycles.

The patent is focused on the radiator's slatted cover. Each of the slats is mounted on a pivot and they're all connected by a rod at the back that allows them to be opened or closed in unison. A single actuator in the form of an electric servo pulls or pushes the rod to move the slats into the desired position to maximise cooling.

The idea has been spawned by the fact that bike engines require substantial cooling when they're being thrashed in hot ambient temperatures, so on liquid-cooled, high-performance motorcycles there are inevitably large radiators. But much of the time, when you're using only a fraction of the potential power and in more moderate climates, far less cooling is needed. Although a thermostat can ensure consistent temperatures across a broad operating range, big radiators permanently exposed to the airflow create drag. With the ability to direct airflow in a different direction, the result should be better fuel efficiency and potentially improved top speeds. **BP**

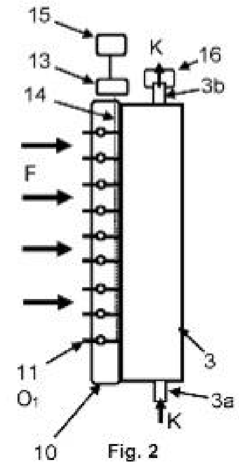
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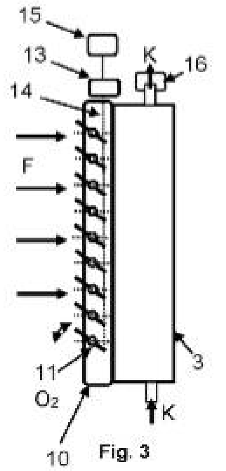
Fig. 2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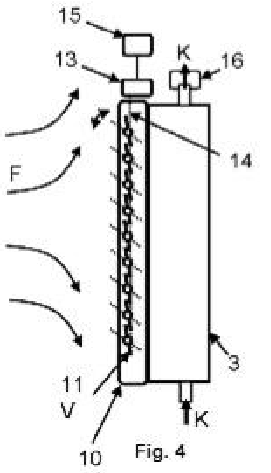
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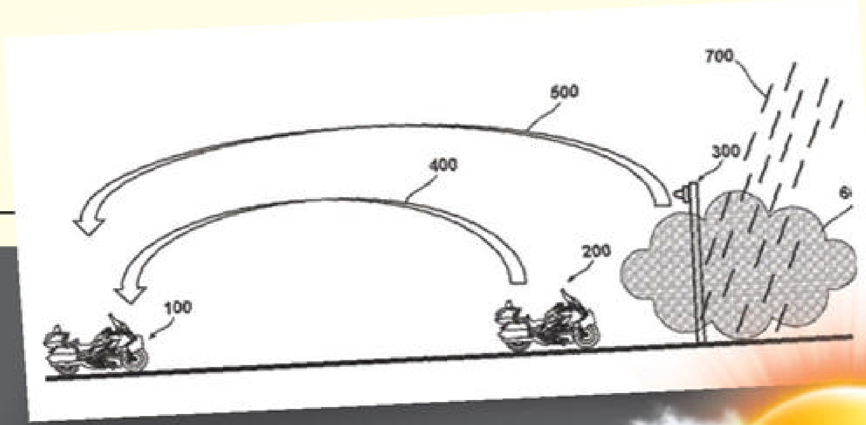
Fig. 4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HONDA'S WEATHER-SENSING NAV

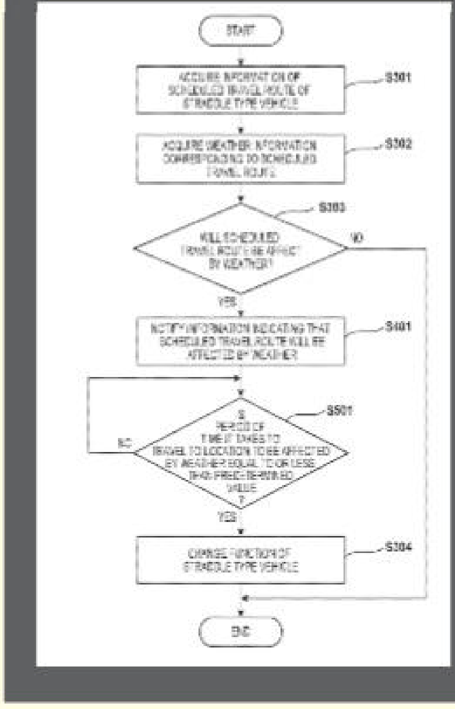
SATNAV SYSTEMS that use real-time traffic information and change course to avoid holdups are already the norm, but Honda is working on a motorcycle-specific variation.

As well as the usual internet-sourced weather forecasts, the system that Honda has filed patent applications for uses radar, cameras and Lidar systems on other vehicles to feed information back to the navigation. This allows it to have up-to-the-moment knowledge of weather conditions, which can be relayed to nearby bikes heading in the same direction. If there's bad weather, the system can automatically look for an alternative route or offer 'refuge' at a nearby service station.

Honda's patent documents illustrate the system on its luxo Goldwing, which makes sense as it is working on a high-tech revamp for this range-topping tourer to include the latest in camera and radar devices.

The system could also be used to automatically alter the bike's settings to suit weather conditions, such as changing the windscreen position or the temperature of the heated grips.

In a related patent application, Honda has illustrated a further version of its connected-vehicle navigation system that will identify hazards such as potholes and alert other riders before they arrive at the scene. **BP**


START
ACQUIRE INFORMATION OF SCHEDULED TRAVEL ROUTE OF STRADDLE TYPE VEHICLE
S301
ACQUIRE WEATHER INFORMATION CORRESPONDING TO SCHEDULED TRAVEL ROUTE
S302
S303
WILL SCHEDULED TRAVEL ROUTE BE AFFECT BY WEATHER?
NO
YES
NOTIFY INFORMATION INDICATING THAT SCHEDULED TRAVEL ROUTE WILL BE AFFECTED BY WEATHER
S401
S501
IS PERIOD OF TIME IT TAKES TO TRAVEL TO LOCATION TO BE AFFECTED BY WEATHER EQUAL TO OR LESS THAN PREDETERMINED VALUE ?
NO
YES
CHANGE FUNCTION OF STRADDLE TYPE VEHICLE
S304
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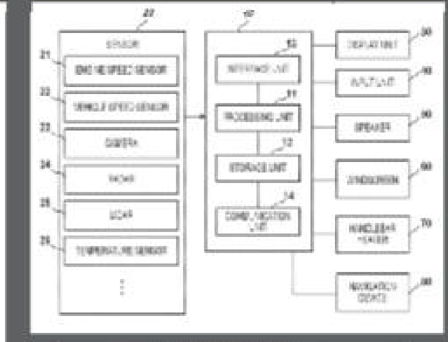
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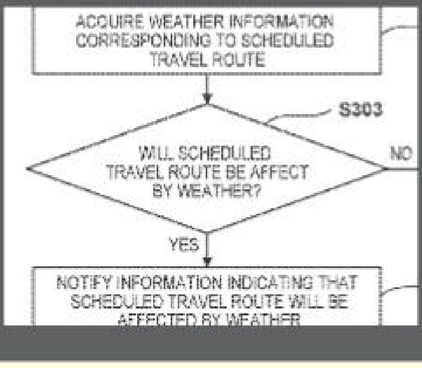
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IN PIT LANE COLUMN

LIVING ON THE GP RAZOR'S EDGE
Fine margins can make or break careers
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THE 2023 MOTOGP SEASON KICKS OFF!
And we've got all the news from Sepang
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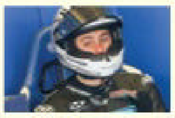
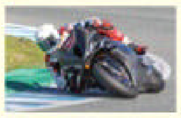




CFMOTO 800NK REVEALED

After a concept and plenty of leaks, the KTM-engined 800NK is finally confirmed

800NK
CFMOTO
ABS

CFMoto's new 800NK has already had several episodes with a variety of teases and leaks over the last few months, but the firm has now revealed the first official pictures and details.

Stacking up against bikes like the new Honda Hornet 750, Suzuki's new GSX-8S and KTM's reborn 790 Duke, the 800NK already looks like a tempting proposition that gives the Chinese brand another big step into the mainstream.

The KTM is inevitably the closest competitor, since the 790 Duke is built in China by the joint venture set up by KTM and CFMoto. As part of the deal, CFMoto uses its own version of the 799cc KTM LC8c engine in its 800MT adventure bike range, and the same unit also powers the new 800NK.

Previewed by the NK-C22 concept shown last year, the 800NK production model was leaked the following month in design drawings, with real photos emerging via type-approval documents in December. However, these are the first official pictures.

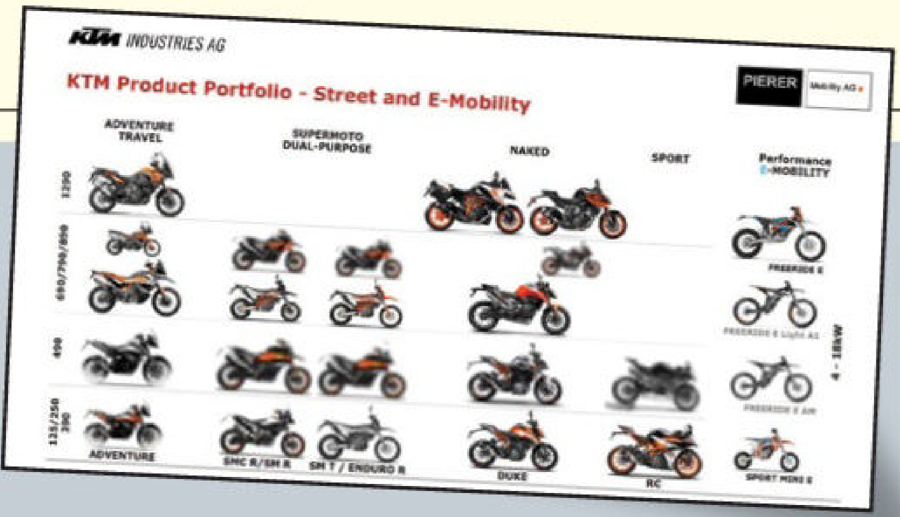
In the 800NK, the engine is good for 74kW (99hp) at 9000rpm and 81Nm at 8000rpm, on the way to a 10,500rpm redline. Top speed is claimed to be north of 220km/h, and the bike's wet weight is a mere 186kg. That means its more powerful and lighter than either the Hornet 750 (67.6kW [90hp], 190kg) or the Suzuki GSX-8S (61kW [82hp], 202kg). The KTM 790 Duke, which was recently reintroduced in several markets (but not Australia), with production shifting from Austria to China to reduce costs, makes 70kW (94hp).

The engine's in a steel tube frame, with an alloy swingarm at the back – double sided, not the single-sider that appeared on the NK-C22 concept – but front suspension appears to be an adjustable USD fork, and the brakes are midrange J.Juan radial calipers. Like a lot of new Chinese models, there's a huge TFT dash, unusually positioned in a portrait orientation. Details are still limited with CFMoto only confirming the 800NK has three riding modes: Street, Sport and Rain.

The concept's stacked SC-Project exhausts are replaced with a more subtle design for production, but it's impressively compact and the single, high-mounted end-can looks more elegant than the concept's shouty twin pipes.

More information is sure to emerge soon, but the key will be price. Recent history suggests the 800NK won't be a low-cost alternative to the likes of the Hornet 750, but a bike that perhaps offers a higher specification for a similar outlay.

BEN PURVIS



KTM'S NEW TWIN

FOR SEVERAL years KTM has been open about its ongoing effort to develop a new '490' parallel-twin range in partnership with India's Bajaj. But now those plans appear to be dropped, with *Autocar India* claiming to have confirmation from KTM boss Stefan Pierer that the project has been permanently shelved. Likewise, plans for the '490' range - which were prominent in investor relations documents as early as 2019 - have disappeared from later investor presentations.

The 490 models were originally intended to be midsized twins to plug the gap between the single-cylinder, 373cc '390' range and the parallel-twin LC8c-powered, 799cc '790' models, which later grew to 889cc '890' machines.

And while rumours now suggest a downsized, sub-700cc version of the LC8c could be introduced instead of the 490, KTM may also have other options courtesy of its Chinese partner, CFMoto. It already has 650cc and 700cc twins for its own range and recently introduced a very modern, high-tech 450cc parallel twin in the 450SR sportsbike.

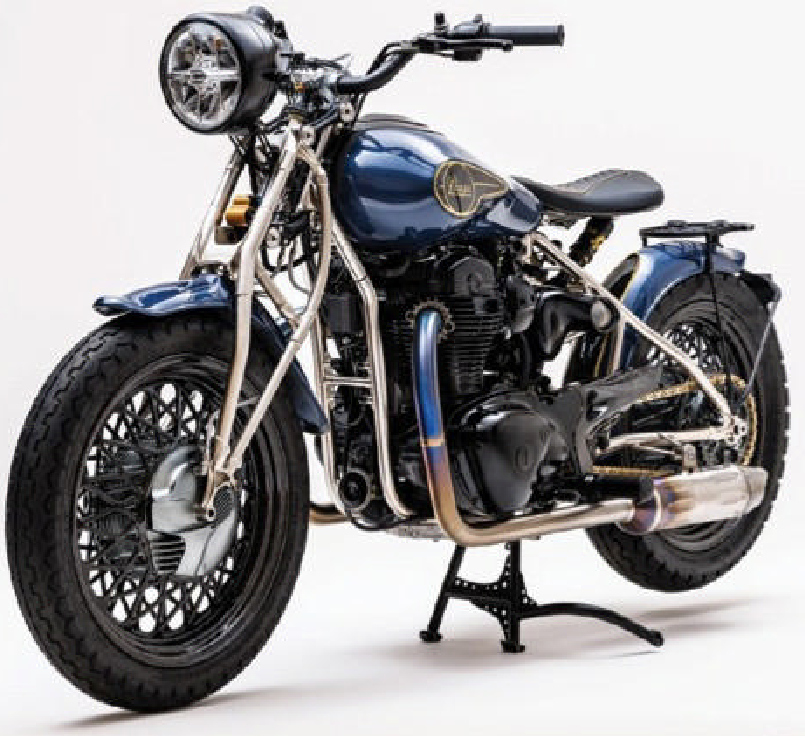
The 450SR's engine, in particular, could be ideal for KTM if the company wants to make a middleweight twin. With 37kW (49.7hp) and 39Nm it's a step ahead of the KTM 390 single-cylinder engine - and its right at the start of its development life, suggesting there's potential for plenty more in future. **BP**

ANOTHER CHINESE FOUR

CHINESE FIRMS are racing to make four-cylinder sportsbikes, and the strangely named Nooma is the latest. The bike seen here is codenamed NM663, likely to represent its capacity and, like several other recent Chinese fours, the engine has clear physical similarities to Honda's CB650R powerplant.

It's bolted to what appears to be a cast aluminium frame, with a swingarm made the same way, and wrapped in race-inspired styling that doesn't seem to be a straight copy of any existing bike. An upside-down fork, radial four-pot ABS brakes and a TFT flatscreen dash are all clearly visible in the pictures.

Exports outside China are unlikely, at least in the short-term, but the Nooma appears to be another example of the rapid development of China's motorcycle industry. **BP**



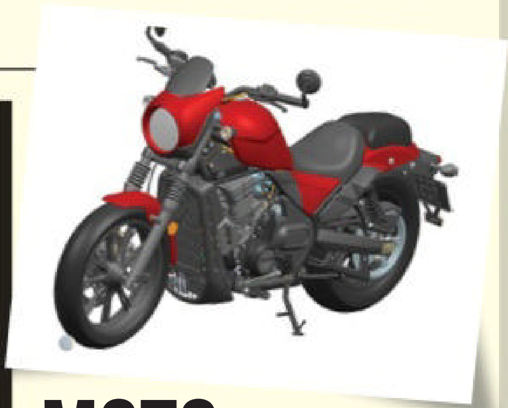
$133K FOR A 37KW RIGID?!

PRAGA ISN'T a familiar brand, but it's a name that's sporadically appeared on bikes for nearly a century and it's back for 2023 with an astoundingly expensive twin.

The ZS 800 borrows its 773cc, air-cooled twin from Kawasaki's W800, which is bolted to a hardtail steel frame that's dripping with exotic components. Almost every fastener is titanium, while the wheels - which look like wires - are actually made of forged carbon-fibre.

A girder fork harks back to the 1920s but features an Öhlins TTX22 shock. Another Öhlins supports the rider's saddle, giving a modicum of compliance despite the lack of rear suspension.

While most bikes nearing the ZS 800's stratospheric price - €86,000 ($A133,000) plus shipping and taxes - use race-style Brembos and vast discs, the Praga uses simplex drum brakes built into the wheels. Praga plans to build 28 examples, and the first machine has already found a buyer in Dubai. **BP**



MOTO MORINI ADDS CRUISER TO LINE-UP

AFTER INTRODUCING the 649cc Seiemmezzo roadster and similarly powered X-Cape adventure bike (pictured, bottom), Moto Morini is now taking on the cruiser and heavyweight adventure markets.

The cruiser's engine, as on the other two models, is borrowed from CFMoto, which uses the same power unit in the 650NK, MT and GT models, so should be good for around 45kW (60hp) and 54Nm of torque.

The frame is model-specific with a low seat height, long wheelbase and a stretched-out rake. Suspension is a conventional fork and twin rear shocks, while the styling is similar to Honda's Rebel 500 or Kawasaki's Vulcan S.

Morini is also planning a range of 750cc V-twin models with a new, 72kW (96hp) engine that's yet to be seen. Morini has also talked of a 900cc derivative, and is set to reintroduce its own 1187cc V-twin in the new X-Cape 1200 adventure bike.

We revealed design illustrations of the X-Cape 1200 last year, but now the real thing has emerged - albeit without any technical details. It features an upside-down fork, Brembo brakes, and a 19-inch front and 17-inch rear wrapped in Pirelli Scorpion rubber. **BP**

BRIEFS. YOUR QUICK FIX

DID YOU KNOW? Kawasaki's 1980 Z1000H was the first road-going production motorcycle to use fuel injection.

"I think it is a realistic goal to be finishing inside the top six pretty much every race"

Aussie WorldSSP rider Oli Bayliss talks up his 2023 chances after switching to the Davide Giugliano-owned 3DG4 Ducati squad for the forthcoming season.

1000

France's Le Mans circuit will host its 1000th Grand Prix when over 100,000 fans will pack the stands for the 12-14 May MotoGP round.

UP, UP AND AWAY

The world's first flying motorcycle, the Jetpack Aviation Speeder, is undergoing test flight before possible Federal Aviation Authority certification in the US later this year. The American project, which we have followed for several years, is being tested on a tether in California. A basic prototype has achieved autonomous takeoffs and landings and has hovered and transitioned to forward flight. An unmanned military version is also being developed.

KLOCK ON

Following in the tyre tracks of Jessi Combs, who became the first female Grand Marshal at the Sturgis Rally in 2017, is land speed racer and Discovery Channel star Laura Klock.

A CLASSIC CASE

A UK study has revealed classic motorcycles are responsible for less than 0.05 percent of all transport emission pollution in the UK. Maybe they aren't ridden enough.

HOT & NOT

AMCN'S THERMOMETER

BASTARD ACT

NSW's Maitland District Motorcycle Club has been devastated by an arson attack on its clubrooms and memorabilia.

IRISH BLOW

Soaring insurance costs have led to the cancellation of all of Northern Ireland's 2023 road races. A rescue package is being worked on.

WUNDERFUL

Wunderlich, the German aftermarket giant more often associated with adventure market leader BMW, is now offering accessories for Harley-Davidson's Pan America range. Wunderlich CEO Frank Hoffmann says: "The (Pan America) ergonomics are excellent - even for taller people such as myself. As per usual with Harleys there are ample customisation possibilities." Another German company, Held, has also announced it is collaborating with Harley-Davidson on a range of branded riding apparel.

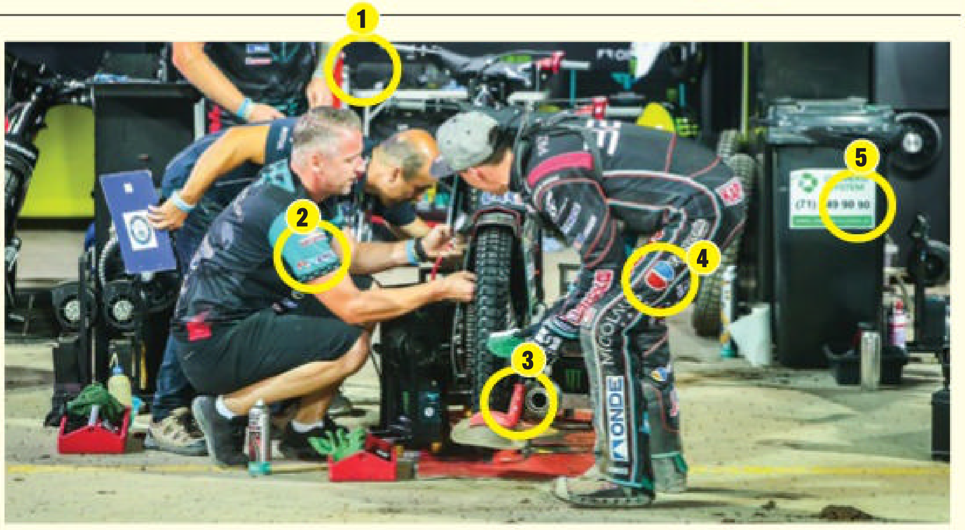
THEM AND US

Despite thinking we're all quick riders when it counts, road racing star Peter Hickman and MotoGP rider Jorge Martin quickly brought us back down to earth this fortnight. Footage of Hickman performing a so-called demonstration lap around the TT's Mountain Course on a BMW HP4 was said to be at an *average* speed of 117mph (188km/h), while the Prima Pramac Ducati rider lapped Portimao on a stock Panigale roadbike in 1m42.5s - just over one second slower than the time he posted in the second lap of the 2022 Portuguese GP!

MENTAL TWISTIES

The, err, personalised picture of Pole Pawel Przedpelski puzzled and perplexed plenty, but not **Lucy Lasker** from Queanbeyan, NSW!

1. M bottle gone
2. Extra W on logo
3. Extra bolt head
4. Logo made red
5. 90 added



S-1
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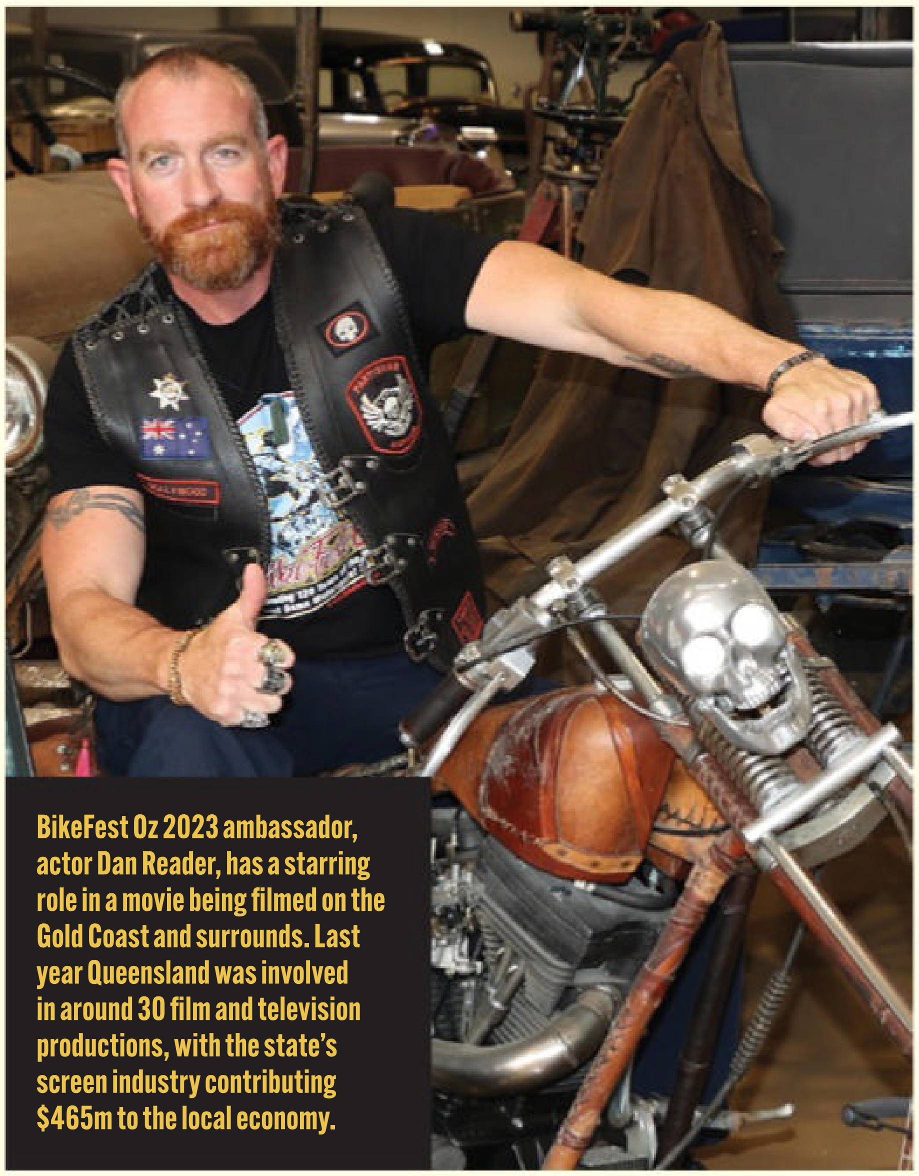
MOVIN' ON UP

Festival heads north for more fun in the sun


BikeFest Oz 2023 ambassador, actor Dan Reader, has a starring role in a movie being filmed on the Gold Coast and surrounds. Last year Queensland was involved in around 30 film and television productions, with the state's screen industry contributing $465m to the local economy.

BEATTIE SAYS THERE WAS A TOTALLY DIFFERENT ATTITUDE WHEN HE WENT NORTH OF THE BORDER

A change of date and venue brings Bike Fest Oz 2023 (BFO) into the motorcycle retail hub of the Gold Coast and coincides with a major motoring event. Bike Fest Oz 2023 now takes place over 7-11 June and is based on Queensland's Gold Coast, rather than northern NSW. The new date coincides with Coolangatta's annual Cooly Rocks On festival that celebrates the cars and lifestyle of the 1950s and 60s. Cooly Rocks On recently won gold in the Major Festivals and Events category at the Queensland Tourism Awards.

BFO promotor Chris Beattie said that while northern NSW tourism businesses were committed to his event, local government authorities simply weren't.

"They were actually incredibly hostile to the idea of motorcyclists visiting the Tweed and other NSW coastal regions and spending their money at various hard-hit businesses during their stays," he said.

"Our feedback is that many, many rate-paying local hospitality and tourism businesses are furious at the loss of our festival."

Beattie says there was a totally different attitude when he went north of the border into Queensland.

"One of the first contacts we received after our announcement was from a major Queensland tourism body to invite a grants application to support the festival and also to offer to do as much as possible in order to ensure that the inaugural Bike Fest Oz delivers all it can to its many supporters, participants and visitors," said Beattie.

Organisers are starting to lock in the various BFO-dedicated events, including the Poker Run, Rolling Thunder Ride (which is the only event scheduled to now run across the border from Coolangatta down to Brunswick Heads in northern NSW) and other organised rides, exhibitions, an official raffle and other prize giveaways and trade shows.

Beattie said that the fact Cooly Rocks On is being run on the same five days, and basically in the same area, allows festival visitors to "double their fun" on the Gold Coast.

"In making the change, we're actually guaranteeing that our supporters and participants are going to have a much wider choice of events, entertainment and activities to keep them fully engaged for the full five days," said Beattie.

The new dates are in the middle of a tourism low season, giving greater accommodation choices across a cross-section of price segments. Beattie pointed out that the Gold Coast hinterland is packed with riding opportunities for owners of all bikes, from sports and touring to adventure and off-road.

"One thing's for sure," he said. "Visitors are not going to run out of choices when they visit the Gold Coast in June." Keep up to date by registering at www.bikefestoz.com.au for updates. **HAMISH COOPER**

RECALL ROSTER

CHECK IF YOUR MOTORCYCLE IS AFFECTED BY THIS RECENT RECALL

MODEL 2021-22 Kawasaki ZX1002P (Ninja H2SX)
IMPORTER Kawasaki Motors Pty Ltd
NUMBER OF AFFECTED MOTORCYCLES 40
ISSUE A programming defect in the multi-function meter may cause the display to restart unexpectedly while in use. If this occurs, the speedometer or neutral indicator may not display as intended, resulting in the rider unable to determine the speed of the vehicle.

MODEL 2021-23 Triumph Speed Triple RS & RR
IMPORTER PS Importers Pty Ltd
NUMBER OF AFFECTED MOTORCYCLES 279
ISSUE Due to a manufacturing defect the radiator fan can exceed its maximum temperature limit leading to a malfunction of the coolant fan motor. If the rider ignores the warning light and continues to operate the motorcycle, coolant fluid may leak.

READY TO RACE
ADVENTURE MORE!
KTM

KISKA.COM   Photo: F. Montero

Gone are the days when going from A to B. The **2023 KTM 390 ADVENTURE** rewrites the rulebook on what the daily commute needs to be. Merging all-road versatility and proven reliability with real-world performance, a proven 373 cc powerplant, and a class-leading chassis, the KTM 390 ADVENTURE not only seeks out new adventures - it leaves no path unexplored.

AVAILABLE NOW **KTM.COM**

Please make no attempt to imitate the illustrated riding scenes, always wear protective clothing and observe the applicable provisions of the road traffic regulations! The illustrated vehicles may vary in selected details from the production models and some illustrations feature optional equipment available at additional cost.

THE YEAR WAS...

2000

Of course, what everyone will remember most from the year 2000 will be the hangover on 1 January, the hugely successful Sydney Olympics and, of course, waking up with all computer-controlled mechanics still in tact after the feared Y2K bug never eventuated.

But it wasn't all fun and games. Johnny 'eyebrows' Howard was ushering in the new GST system and fighting off portly opposition leader Kim Beazley, before NSW suffered through its worst floods in 40 years. So it seems that after two decades not a lot has changed.

EVO RR

Honda fightback: EvoRR now availab

Developed by British tuning specialist RS Performance in conjunction with Honda, the EvoRR was a hotted-up version of Honda's CBR600. The EvoRR came as a parts kits that customers could fit to their CBR. The top-notch kit contained all-new bodywork, Öhlins suspension, Brembo brakes, an uprated engine with higher rev limit and stronger midrange, 39mm flatslide carbs, a trick new airbox and a Micron exhaust system. All that for just $20,000 (roughly $38,000 in today's money) - plus the cost of the CBR!

COLIN NO FOG

Billed as a straight fight between reigning WorldSBK champion Carl Fogarty and Colin Edwards on his shiny new V-twin Honda VTR1000SPW, that wasn't the case at the opening round of the 2000 championship in Kyalami, South Africa. What wasn't factored in was Yamaha gun Noriyuki Haga. Edwards narrowly won Race 1, with Fogarty third behind the hard-charging Japanese rider. In Race 2, Haga nicked the win from Edwards, with Suzuki's Francesco Chili taking third after Foggy threw his Ducati down the road on lap nine.

SUPERSPORT COMPARO
AUSTRALIAN
motor CYCLE news
Vol 49 No 19, April 14-27, 2000 $4.95 NZ $6.30 incl GST
ZX-6R
VERSUS
R6
Island SWC and Bathurst: all you need to know!
ACP Action
ON TEST... McFarlane's KX500 • BMW F650GS • BMW K1200LT
Suzuki DR-Z400 PLUS... South African SWC • Malaysian GP
Japanese GP • Formula Xtreme Rd1 • AGV Super Series Rd1
First Ride: Triumph TT600

AMCN
Vol 49 No 19

124 pages, $4.95
14-27 April 2000
Editor Ken Wootton

COVER

ZX-6R v R6, and a TT600! Three 600s on the cover back when supesports were big business.

BE CONVERTED

ERA AD

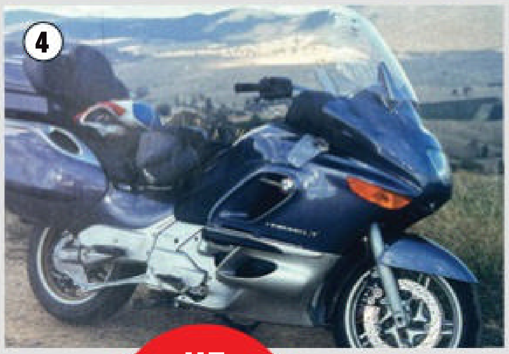
Sometimes we pine for days gone by, when things were simpler and life was slower. But it wasn't all good. We had Volvo ads in AMCN for goodness' sake!

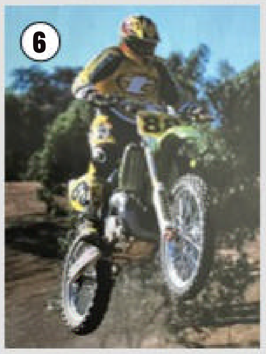
PICS OF THE ISSUE

BIKE TESTS

1 Suzuki DR-Z400
2 BMW F 650 GS
3 Kawasaki ZX-6R v Yamaha YZF-R6
4 BMW K 1200 LT
5 Triumph TT600
6 Kawasaki KX500 (Andrew McFarlane's hybrid KX250/500)

3
Kawasaki ZX-6R versus Yamaha YZF-R6
Head 2 Head
comparo
YAMAHA





HE SAID THAT?

"It was a Team Kawasaki Australia hybrid special for the late Andrew McFarlane: a KX500 engine in a KX250 frame, and he rode out of his skin in the Broadford world MX opener against guns like Stefan Everts. Unfortunately, my effort just weeks later wasn't as rousing, on a freshly graded track that was slick and rutless."

Mark 'Mav' Fattore on what it was like riding Andrew's monster KX500 hybrid. He still remembers the experience almost 23 years later.

3
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1. Tonight's celebrity gardener.
2. A Hayabusa in an Aussie superbike race, which is something you don't see every day.
3. If you know, you know! If you don't then this is just the name of a town in northern NSW.

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BSD ACC VHA ESS TPMS SPIN KIPASS

VHA - VEHICLE HOLD ASSIST
TFT COLOUR INSTRUMENTATION
KAWASAKI SPIN INFOTAINMENT SYSTEM
KIPASS - KAWASAKI INTELLIGENT PROXIMITY ACTIVATION START
FCW - FORWARD COLLISION WARNING
ESS - EMERGENCY STOP SIGNAL

KQS - KAWASAKI QUICK SHIFTER
ARAS - ADVANCED RIDER ASSIST SYSTEM
TPMS - TYRE PRESSURE MONITORING SYSTEM
ACC - ADAPTIVE CRUISE CONTROL MAINTAINS SPEED & DISTANCE
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LETTER OF THE ISSUE

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Win five litres of Motomuck Motorcycle Cleaner to keep your ride as clean as a whistle. Valued at $59.95!

Include your full name and address in your letter, via post or email. Long letters will be cut to fit, so don't ramble. The views expressed by readers are not necessarily those of the editor.

LETTER OF THE ISSUE
Face off
HONDA

LETTER OF THE ISSUE

Good advice

Regarding Brian Breakey's *Face off* letter (AMCN Vol 72 No 15), if your choice of helmet is an open-face, please remember to SLIP SLOP SLAP. You don't want to lose your nose to skin cancer.

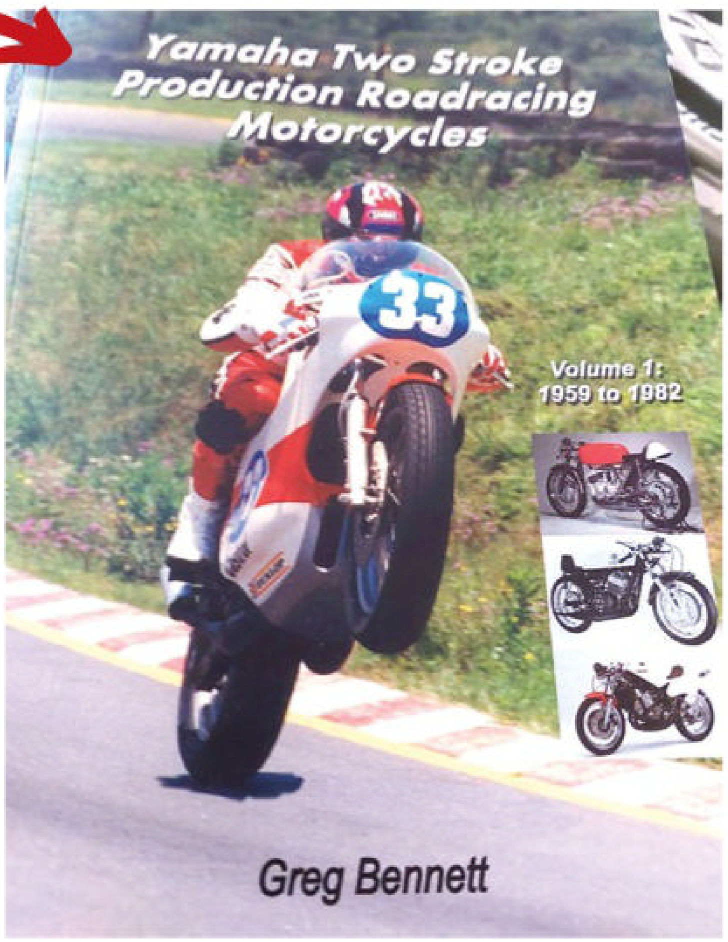
Wayne Nikitin
via email

Happenstance

I refer to the feature on the TZ250s and TZ350 in the latest issue (AMCN Vol 72 No 15). What a coincidence... I was just given this book *Yamaha Two Stroke Production Roadracing Motorcycles* by the author, Greg Bennett, it was written in 2006.

Greg now lives and works in Crookwell, New South Wales.

Richard Stevens
via email



Brilliant performance, but how much to keep the electric dream alive?

Pack it in

Even though I am a die-hard internal combustion engine fan, I am mildly interested in the advancement of electric bikes. There will certainly come a time when governments raise the taxes on petrol and or registration to a point where we have to buy/run electric bikes.

And now that electric bikes are approaching and or exceeding the power and torque specs of your modern-day superbikes and nakeds, it piques my attention – we all love the rush you get from the acceleration of a litre-plus superbike or even naked these days (now manufacturers have stopped de-tuning nakeds).

After reading the article *Fast Forward* on Energica's Ego and Ribelle in the magazine (AMCN Vol 72 No 14), the power and torque specs definitely grabbed my attention. Can I make a suggestion that any future electric-bike reviews that you do, could you also include in the specs column the price of a replacement battery or battery pack? There is no way I, and I presume many of your readers, would ever be able to afford a $50,000 bike. If that were the case, we would all be riding around on Ducatis or MV Agustas and the likes. Just a suggestion, keep up the good work.

Marc Pettitt
Kambalda, WA

There is no doubt the battery would make up a fair chunk of the price of any electric bike Marc. We'll definitely ask the question next time we test one, as well as how many cycles the battery is designed to take. That won't be too far off with Aussie start-up Savic Motorcycles expected to launch in April of this year. Deano

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A seminal 2023 season for Morbidelli, who's been in the MotoGP doldrums

Page refresh

Just a quick note to say that I love the fresh look AMCN has taken on this year. The new design is clean, bright and somehow easier to read – which is good for my ageing eyes! Still the best bike mag in the country, if not the world, and the ways things are going it might be the only one left soon!

Keep up the good work guys and gals. Don't know how you do it, but please keep doing it.

Clive Martin
Coburg, Vic

Thanks Clive. There's no doubt our very experienced, efficient and oh-so patient Art Director Wisey is a dab hand when it comes to making pages look good, even on a deadline Monday. Deano

Franky can't relax

Hey, Josh [Shoemark] (AMCN Vol 72 No 13) and Ben [Hood] (AMCN Vol 72 No 15), I totally agree with you that Raul Fernandez needs to lose the attitude and find some pace, but not-so-young Franky Morbidelli will need to find some results this year I reckon if he doesn't want to end up as Remy Gardner's teammate next year, too.

What he did on that two-year-old Yamaha in 2020 when he finished runner-up to Joan Mir was nothing short of brilliant, but a promotion to the factory team and a fair old tweak to his knee later, and he's turned from a quick cool cat into a rider who could only muster a single top-10 finish last year.

Such a nice bloke, though, and I reckon that's why he's been given another chance. It can't just be because he's a former Moto2 world champ, or the likes of Gardner and Tito Rabat would still be in the paddock.

Come on Franky, I've tipped you as my dark horse in the tipping comp me and the boys run every year – so do me proud! As for the champ? No question, it'll be Marc Marquez. It's the first time he's started season in four or five years fully fit. Forget that the bike's not sorted yet, he'll be so motivated to win races again, so keen to prove he's still got it, and so determined to win more titles than Valentino Rossi, that he'll do what he's always been able to do and ride around the problems of the Honda.

Dale Bennett
via email

No doubt, Frankie is a top fella, Dale, and we also wish him all the best for 2023. As for MM93, he is going to have to contend with more than riding around the problems of his Honda this year, with regulation tyre pressure monitors no doubt set to steal more front-end grip from all the riders - as well as the new half-distance sprint race format that could shake things up a lot this year. Whatever happens, it's certainly going to be an intriguing season. Deano

> I TOTALLY AGREE WITH YOU THAT RAUL FERNANDEZ NEEDS TO LOSE THE ATTITUDE

Get off the gear

What is it with riders looking down their noses when someone else chooses not to go all-the-gear-all-the-time (ATGATT)? Last I looked, this was a free country and apart from the government mandated use of a standards-approved helmet, a rider has the right to wear as much or as little gear as he or she wants to.

For the most part I always wear a full deck of protective kit, but what others do is their choice and if you want to take the risk of becoming estranged from a large part of your flesh, then that's your choice to make. But the whinging and whining you hear around the traps from ATGATT wankers is nauseating. Choosing to wear appropriate riding attire doesn't make you better than the guy riding in jeans and a t-shirt. So stop being such condescending twats and mind your own business.

Phil Johnson
via email

I have to agree with you, Phil. I also wear a full suite of protective kit when riding... most of the time, but occasionally, on a hot day, I might be tempted to whip down to the shops in an open-face lid wearing naught but a t-shirt on my torso. Deano

Money where yer mouth is

Any chance AMCN could do reviews and tests on bikes that some of us could actually afford? Because bikes like over-blinged MV Augustas and Ducatis designed by 10-year-olds on red cordial might look good in photos, but how many are sold?

We've gone through 10-15 years of KTM covers, so it would be good to see the bikes we actually buy. We see tests on every other adventure bike out there, but in reality the punters are all buying Ténéré 700s. But there's never anything on them [in the magazine], so we end up on YouTube.

Johno Clarson
Cairns, Qld

How about the Moto Morinis and the Suzuki DR-Z400E in the last issue, or the two Royal Enfield tests in the issue before that, or the V-Strom 250SX in the one before that? We generally run every bike we can get our hands on, Johno, but in the case of the Ténéré 700 Yamaha doesn't currently have one on its test fleet. Hopefully that situation will change prior to the next AMCN adventure issue. Deano

Free to good home

I have been a long-time subscriber and now have over 300 AMCN magazines to give away to anyone who is willing to pick them up. They start at Vol 59 (2010) and run through to Vol 72 (2022). The collection includes some specific older copies, as well as Phillip Island souvenir issues and programs as per the photos.

Some of the older ones are not complete and a few of the newer ones are missing the centrefold picture, but most are complete, read once and stored. I don't want to just dump them. I'm located in the outer northwest suburbs of Melbourne.

David Mckie
via email

Thanksfor letting us know, David. I'm sure someone will be keen to grab that collection off you. Deano

Home heroes

Aussie superbike looks to be in good shape this year. I don't know the political ins and outs, but in terms of the talent and the teams, I'm glad to see we're finally getting some young riders into the top teams, rather than it just being the same old faces – just with a few more wrinkles – battling for the podium round after round.

I understand a safe pair of hands is a safer bet in terms of keeping sponsors happy, but I loved reading Broc Pearson's column last issue and really looking forward to seeing what he can do with the Desmosport squad. And kudos to Troy and Ben for taking the risk.

It'd be great to see Max Stauffer and Ted Collins upset a few of the established apple carts, too. I reckon it's high time we have a fresh flush of new faces through the top class of Australian racing. Might even get a few more bums on seats and eyeballs on the telecasts.

Ian Plaisted
via email

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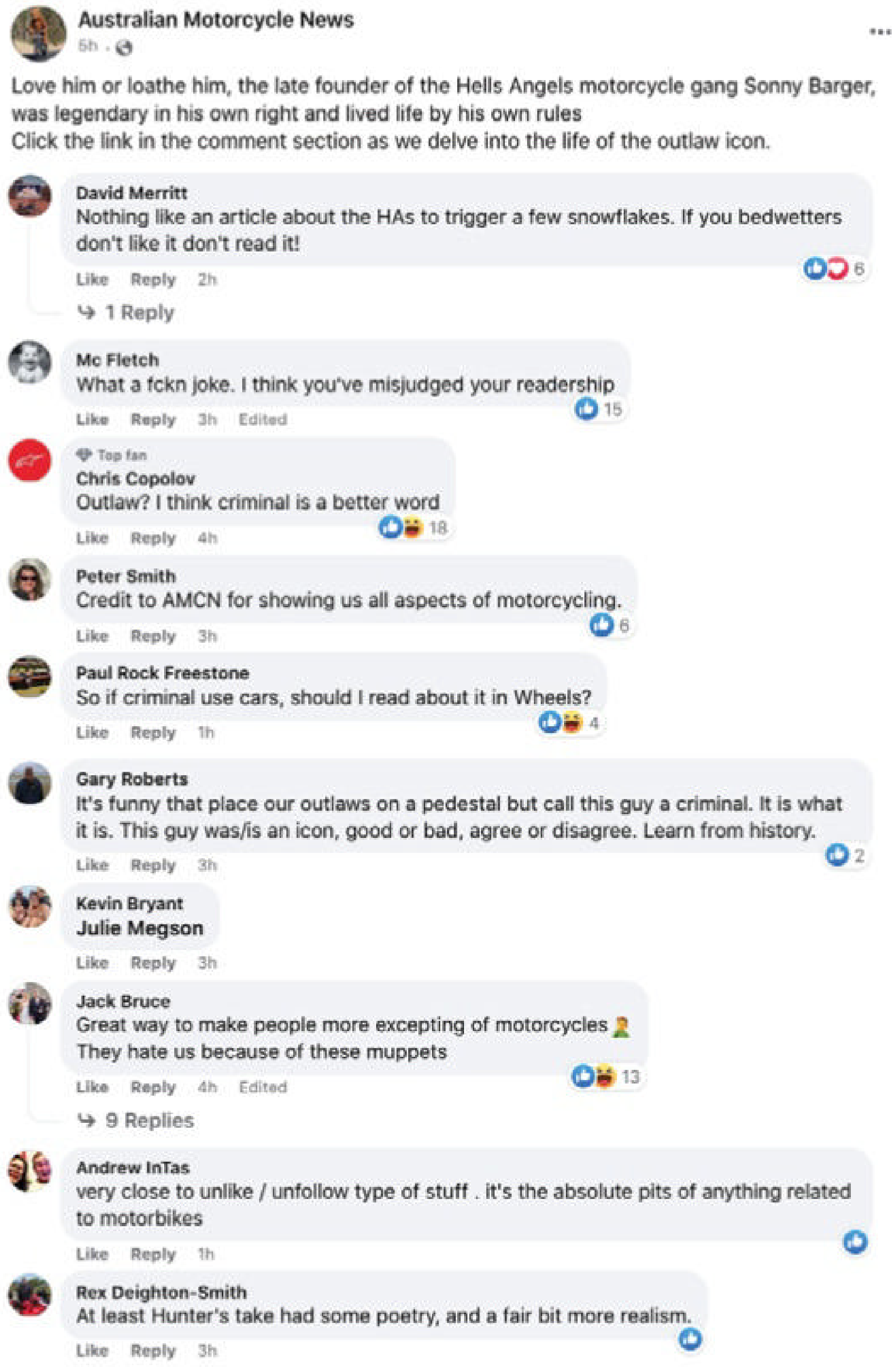
SOCIALS. WHAT YOU SAID

FACEBOOK

Post of the issue



Australian Motorcycle News
5h ·

Love him or loathe him, the late founder of the Hells Angels motorcycle gang Sonny Barger, was legendary in his own right and lived life by his own rules
Click the link in the comment section as we delve into the life of the outlaw icon.

David Merritt
Nothing like an article about the HAs to trigger a few snowflakes. If you bedwetters don't like it don't read it!
Like Reply 2h 6
↳ 1 Reply

Mc Fletch
What a fckn joke. I think you've misjudged your readership
Like Reply 3h Edited 15

Top fan
Chris Copolov
Outlaw? I think criminal is a better word
Like Reply 4h 18

Peter Smith
Credit to AMCN for showing us all aspects of motorcycling.
Like Reply 3h 6

Paul Rock Freestone
So if criminal use cars, should I read about it in Wheels?
Like Reply 1h 4

Gary Roberts
It's funny that place our outlaws on a pedestal but call this guy a criminal. It is what it is. This guy was/is an icon, good or bad, agree or disagree. Learn from history.
Like Reply 3h 2

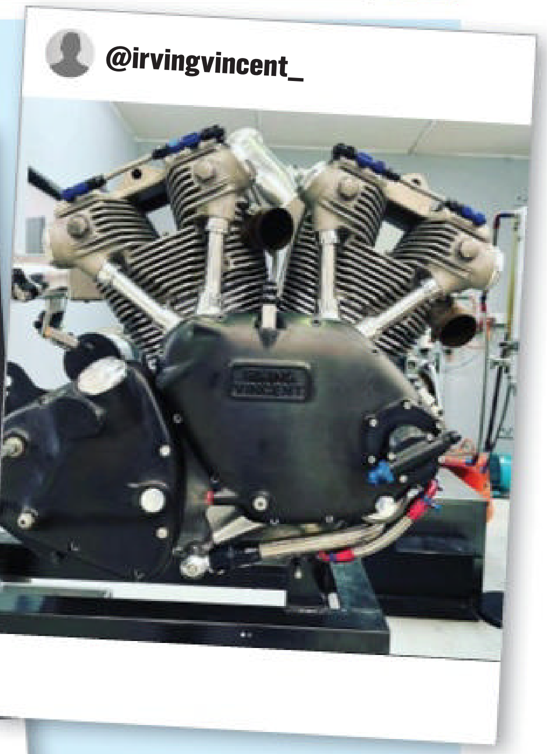
Kevin Bryant
Julie Megson
Like Reply 3h

Jack Bruce
Great way to make people more excepting of motorcycles 🤦
They hate us because of these muppets
Like Reply 4h Edited 13
↳ 9 Replies

Andrew InTas
very close to unlike / unfollow type of stuff . it's the absolute pits of anything related to motorbikes
Like Reply 1h

Rex Deighton-Smith
At least Hunter's take had some poetry, and a fair bit more realism.
Like Reply 3h

INSTAGRAM



Don't Forget #amcn_mag

Comment of the Issue

Darrick Deel has flicked the electric switch, and he's not going back anytime soon!

"A lot of people like that sound, but I don't miss it at all. The reduction gear on the Energica has more of a Tron light cycle scream to it. Riding by just the throttle is amazing. I just can't go back to clutch, gears and brakes."

Reaching out

Want to see your pride and joy featured in AMCN?

The only thing we love more than writing about bikes is looking at your bikes. Tag your social pics with **@aumotorcyclenews** on Facebook or **@amcn_mag** on Instagram, or fire them off in an email to **amcn@amcn.com.au** And don't forget to tell us why you love it.

GET IT OFF YER CHEST!
Got something funny, new, old or wise to say or share? Do it! Head to www.facebook.com/aumotorcyclenews

AMCN'S WEBSITE IS THE PLACE TO BE!

Get all the latest motorcycle news and reviews of your favourite bikes at amcn.com.au

ducati.com

Developed with Shell ADVANCE

Technical partner PIRELLI

EV 39145
EV 39129

New Ducati Multistrada V4 Rally

Unlock Earth

Equipped for epic journeys

The new Multistrada V4 Rally is the ideal travel companion in all conditions, as easy and intuitive in the urban jungle as it is on the most daring off-road routes. High-performance, robust and reliable thanks to the V4 Granturismo and extended service intervals, it will carry you wherever your adventurous heart desires. Designed for long distance riding on any terrain, rider and passenger can enjoy heightened comfort and greater range, which makes the new Multistrada V4 Rally ideal for those seeking an 'all-round' bike.

New Multistrada V4 Rally: The ultimate globetrotter

Displacement 1,158 cc (71 cu in) | **Power** 170 hp (125 kW) @ 10,750 rpm | **Torque** 12.3 kgm (121 Nm, 92 lb ft) @ 8,750 rpm | **Dry weight** 227 kg (500 lb)

Discover the MY23 Ducati Range at ducati.com/au

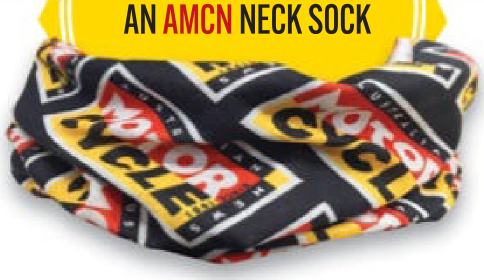
Overseas model is shown and specifications may vary for the local model. The model in this image may feature accessories and merchandise that are not supplied as standard. Always wear protective motorcycle clothing when riding and obey local road regulations. Do not attempt to recreate the riding scene depicted in this image. Contact your Authorised Ducati Dealer for more information.

DUCATI

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

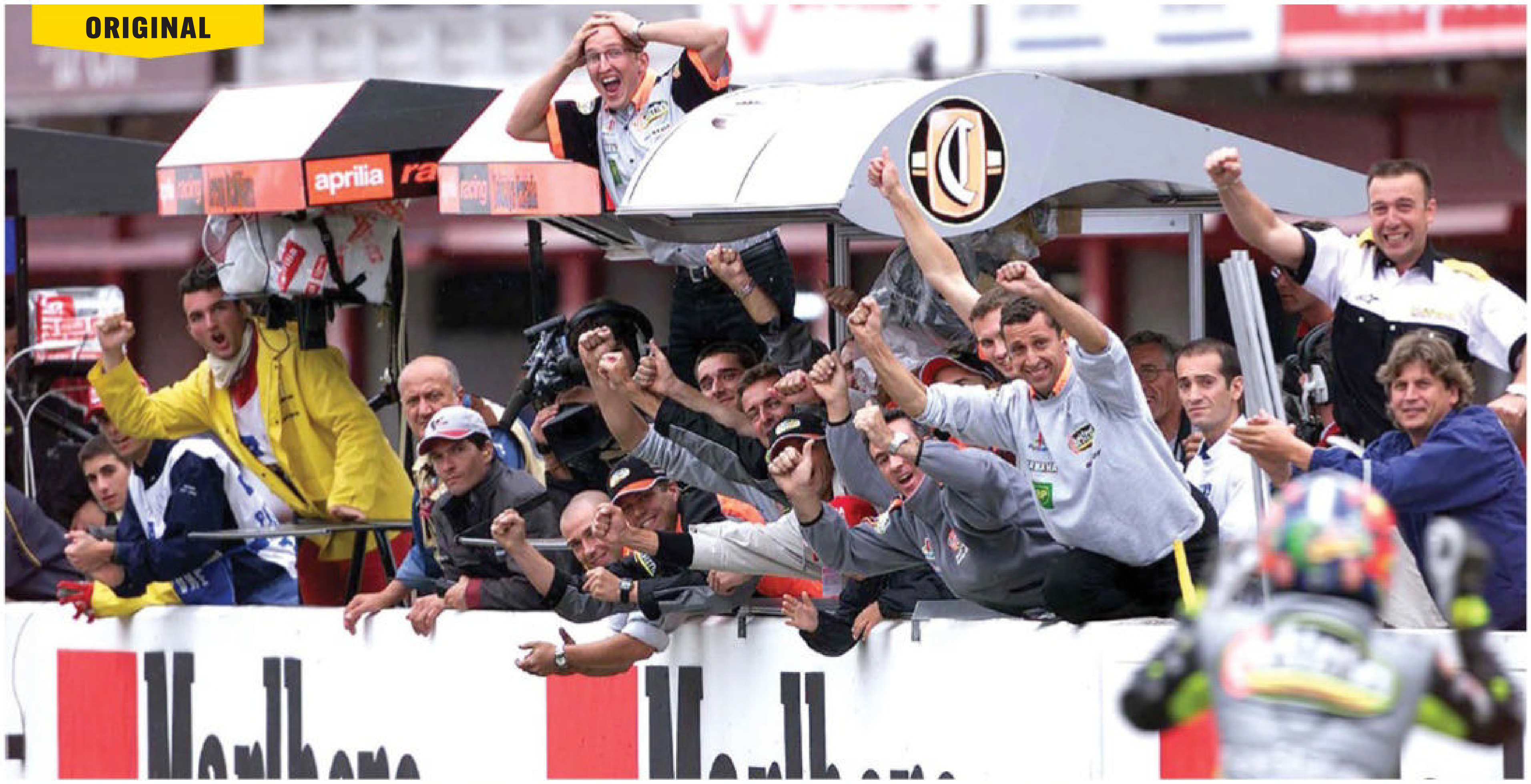
The Tech3 team celebrates a 1-3 result in the 250GP race at Catalunya in 2000. Spot the five changes Fred made to this image, email us your answers and you just may win an AMCN neck sock!

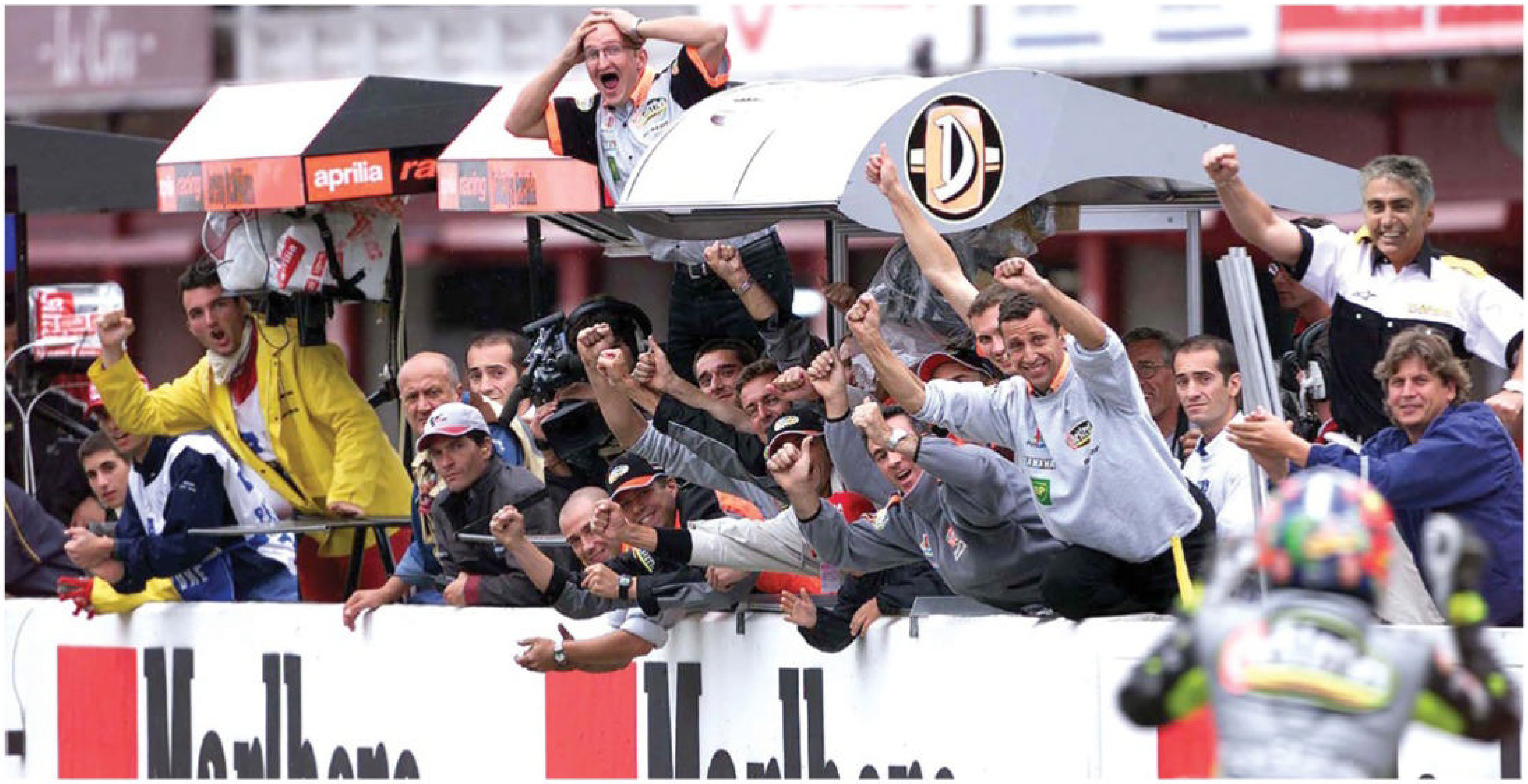
WIN!
AN AMCN NECK SOCK



EMAIL YOUR ANSWERS AND ADDRESS TO AMCN@AMCN.COM.AU FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN!

ORIGINAL





ANSWERS WILL BE REVEALED IN THE NEXT ISSUE

UNMISTAKABLE

Wake up your senses with the 2023 Breakout™ 117.

Flexing more muscle and flashing bright new styling over its long-and-lean chopper profile, the Milwaukee-Eight® 117 V-Twin engine gives the Breakout rider instant bragging rights on the street.

Book a test ride

H-D.com

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TEST **DEAN MELLOR** + PHOTOGRAPHY **DELILAH MELLOR & DM**

TWO-UP TOURING

Despite being a low-capacity single, AMCN's long-term Classic 350 Chrome is a comfortable two-up ride

I've been mostly using the Royal Enfield Classic 350 as an around-town runabout, taking short rides down to the local shopping centre where I can park it right in front of the entrance so I don't have to spend 10 minutes hunting for a car-parking spot. It's ideally suited to this role thanks to its comfortable upright seating position, adequate around-town performance, its fabulous manoeuvrability and its optional rear rack.

The Classic's old-school looks and its lashings of chrome and polished alloy attract plenty of attention, with young and old often caught ogling its almost blinding appearance in full sunlight. On the flipside, keeping all those shiny bits clean can be a bit of a chore, but personally I don't mind like a lazy afternoon in the garage sitting on a milk crate with a motorcycle, a polishing rag and a cold beer. And while it's definitely an extrovert in the looks department, there's nothing intimidating about the appearance of the Classic 350, which is why I managed to convince my wife Renata to hop on the pillion seat for a weekend ride. Prior to this, Renata hadn't been on a motorcycle since she became a mum more than 12 years ago, so this was somewhat of a novelty for both of us. However the smile on her face when we pulled up for a break suggested she was having a great time.

The optional pillion seat fitted to our Classic

RIDER PROFILE

Name Dean Mellor
Height 167cm
Weight 78kg

Fact Deano regrets selling all of his old bikes… but not as much as when he repurchases the same model thinking it will be as good as the first time around.

1. The Royal touch: Deano's wife's first pillion ride in 12 years!
2. In Deano's garage, where all the heavy duty polishing is done
3. …with a beer by his side the whole time, of course
4. The Classic 350 Chrome builds up a head of steam

Retail price $8790 (ride away)

Distance covered **1837km**

Fuel Economy 3.3L/100km

Servicing: First: 1000km Minor: 10,000km Major: 20,000km. **Warranty:** Three years, unlimited km

350 testbike is generously sized and well-padded. It matches the optional brown touring seat we have fitted and it looks great. Renata said that hopping aboard the bike was easy thanks to the low pillion 'pegs, and she was impressed by the overall ergonomics, especially the fact she wasn't perched too high on the bike (like she used to be in the distant past when I subjected her to thousands of kays on the back of a Fireblade).

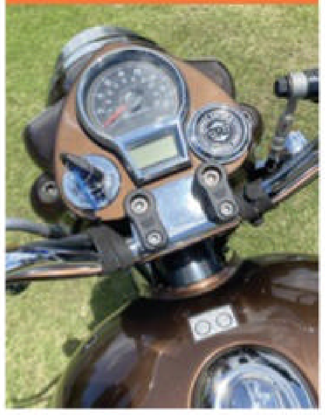
While the 350cc single only punches out a modest 15kW (20hp), the Classic makes its claimed peak torque of 27Nm at a low 4000rpm and, even with two people aboard, it is happy to chug along at a decent clip. Sure, it needed a couple of downshifts to climb hills, but for a leisurely weekend two-up ride it's just the ticket.

> EVEN WITH TWO PEOPLE ABOARD, IT IS HAPPY TO CHUG ALONG AT A DECENT CLIP

Riding solo, I have managed to eke out an indicated 120km/h from the Classic 350, but only when conditions are just right. Having said that, it's happy to cruise along at a 100 clicks most of the time, only dropping to 80-90km/h on the steepest of climbs. It's certainly no long-distance tourer, but that's not its remit: the Classic 350 is primarily a commuter for nostalgic riders who want the looks of yesteryear with the convenience and reliability of a modern motorcycle. In that regard, the RE Classic 350 fulfils its design brief perfectly.

SCREEN FREE

As you might have noticed that since the last update on the Classic 350 (AMCN Vol 72 No 11), we have removed the optional touring screen. While the screen provided some weather protection, it didn't suit my height, causing buffeting around my helmet at highway speeds. The Classic is now much more pleasant to ride on the open road, and I reckon it looks better without the screen fitted too.



2

3

ROYAL ENFIELD

4

OPTIONS ADDED:

Touring seat	$610
Pillion seat	$160
Rear rack	$160
Touring screen (removed)	$200

TO THE

FOUR!

Lighter, quicker, smarter. Meet Ducati's most accomplished Diavel yet

TEST **ADAM CHILD** + PHOTOGRAPHY **ALEX PHOTO**

It doesn't seem that long ago Ducati introduced its daring and genre-busting Diavel concept. And while Yamaha's V-Max was undoubtedly the sector's pioneer, many still struggled to put a label on the big Italian V-twin – was it a cruiser, a muscle bike, a sporty naked maybe or even tourer? But 12 years on, it has come to define its own purpose and place in the world.

I, for one, have toured the Highlands of Scotland on one, ridden a thoroughly enjoyable trackday on one and, of course, showed off on the city streets on one. A Diavel is as a Diavel does.

If we had to put a label on it, however, 'performance cruiser' probably fits best and, since its inception, the Diavel has relentlessly highlighted the stagnation of the traditional American-style cruiser market with its speed, handling and sheer desirability. Also central to the Diavel's success has been Ducati's willingness to evolve the bike over the years. The last major update was in 2019 with the introduction of the 1260 S, and now for 2023 we get an all-new Diavel that ditches its V-twin powerplant for the Granturismo V4.

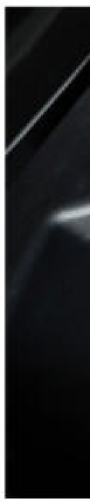
This is a big step for Ducati. Moving away from a traditional, torque-laden V-twin to the higher-revving V4 recently deployed so successfully in the Multistrada range won't thrill everyone. The V4's peak power is up, with a quoted 125kW (168hp) compared to 118kW (160hp) for the Diavel V-twin. Peak torque, however, is fractionally down – from 127Nm to 126Nm – and peaking 2500rpm higher at 7500rpm.

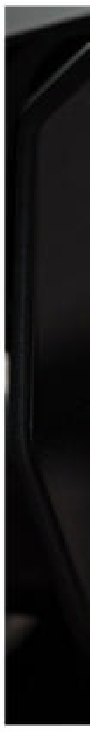
But Ducati hasn't just thrown a new engine in an old chassis, and the new Diavel also gets an all-new monocoque frame. This unique design is light and compact, with a weight saving of 4.7kg. The V4 engine is 5kg lighter than the twin and, overall, Ducati has reduced the Diavel's weight by a massive 13kg.

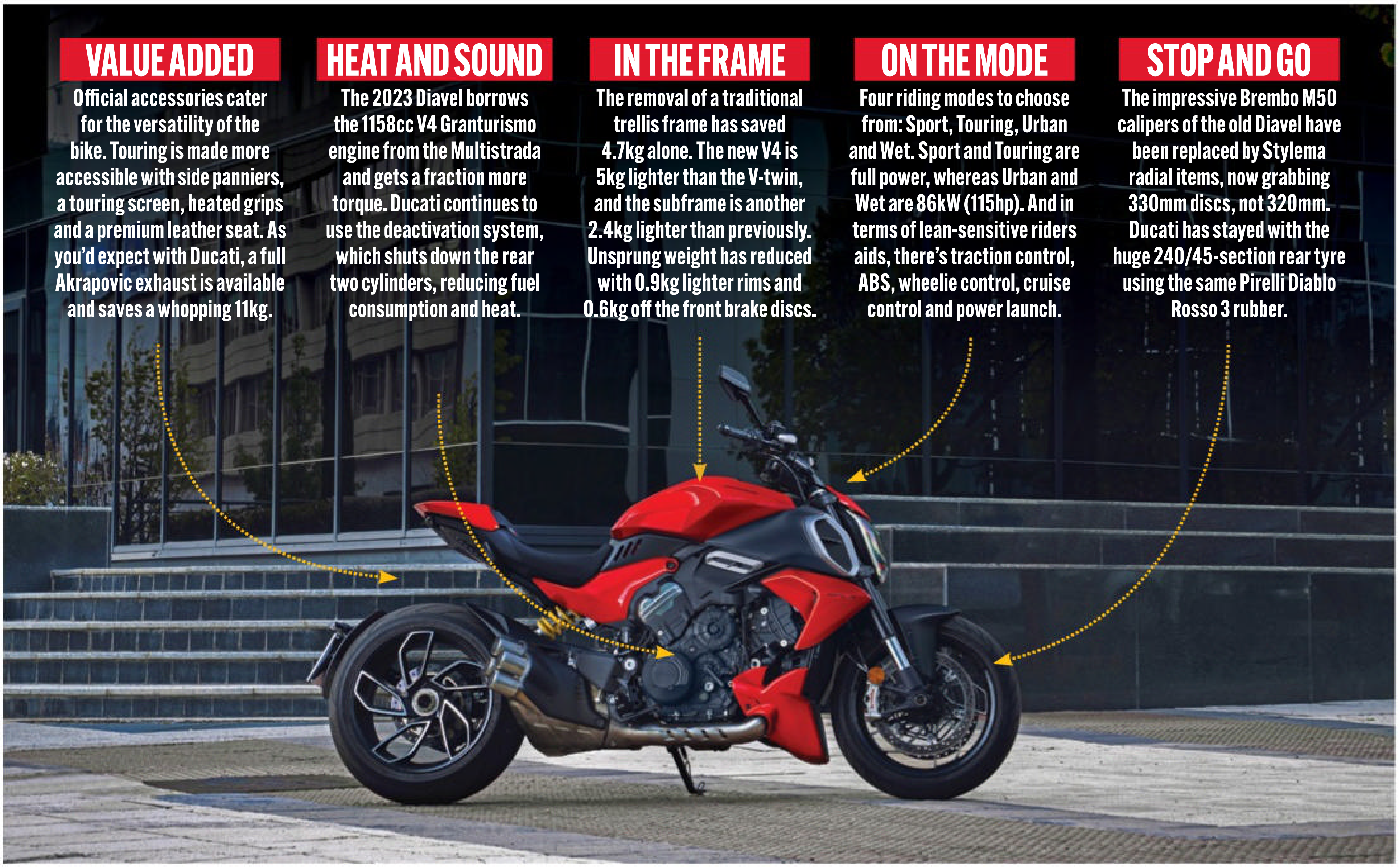
Chassis geometry remains relaxed but the steering is claimed to be sharper than previously, while the suspension gains more travel which, should in theory, improve comfort. Fuel tank capacity has increased by two litres to 20L and there are new Brembo Stylema stoppers up front as well as upgraded electronics – in fact, the Diavel name is about all that's retained.

Design-wise, Ducati hasn't strayed too far from the Diavel's distinctive, muscular look; instead, the new bike has been sharpened and pleasingly indulged. The rider is now greeted by a much-improved, all-new five-inch TFT colour display with Bluetooth connectivity and (optional) turn-by-turn navigation. The screen is easy to read, while swanky backlit switchgear oozes class.

PEAK TORQUE MIGHT BE SLIGHTLY DOWN COMPARED TO THE V-TWIN, BUT YOU'D NEVER PICK IT







VALUE ADDED

Official accessories cater for the versatility of the bike. Touring is made more accessible with side panniers, a touring screen, heated grips and a premium leather seat. As you'd expect with Ducati, a full Akrapovic exhaust is available and saves a whopping 11kg.

HEAT AND SOUND

The 2023 Diavel borrows the 1158cc V4 Granturismo engine from the Multistrada and gets a fraction more torque. Ducati continues to use the deactivation system, which shuts down the rear two cylinders, reducing fuel consumption and heat.

IN THE FRAME

The removal of a traditional trellis frame has saved 4.7kg alone. The new V4 is 5kg lighter than the V-twin, and the subframe is another 2.4kg lighter than previously. Unsprung weight has reduced with 0.9kg lighter rims and 0.6kg off the front brake discs.

ON THE MODE

Four riding modes to choose from: Sport, Touring, Urban and Wet. Sport and Touring are full power, whereas Urban and Wet are 86kW (115hp). And in terms of lean-sensitive riders aids, there's traction control, ABS, wheelie control, cruise control and power launch.

STOP AND GO

The impressive Brembo M50 calipers of the old Diavel have been replaced by Stylema radial items, now grabbing 330mm discs, not 320mm. Ducati has stayed with the huge 240/45-section rear tyre using the same Pirelli Diablo Rosso 3 rubber.

4
V4 GRANTURISMO

1. Just the type of sweeping curves the Diavel V4 loves

2. Firmly wedged in place

3. Just another brawny piece of the Diavel V4 pie

4. The Granturismo engine is certainly something special, and crafty too

5. Bike graphic adds a nice touch on the much-improved TFT screen

6. The matrix of LEDs that form the tailight

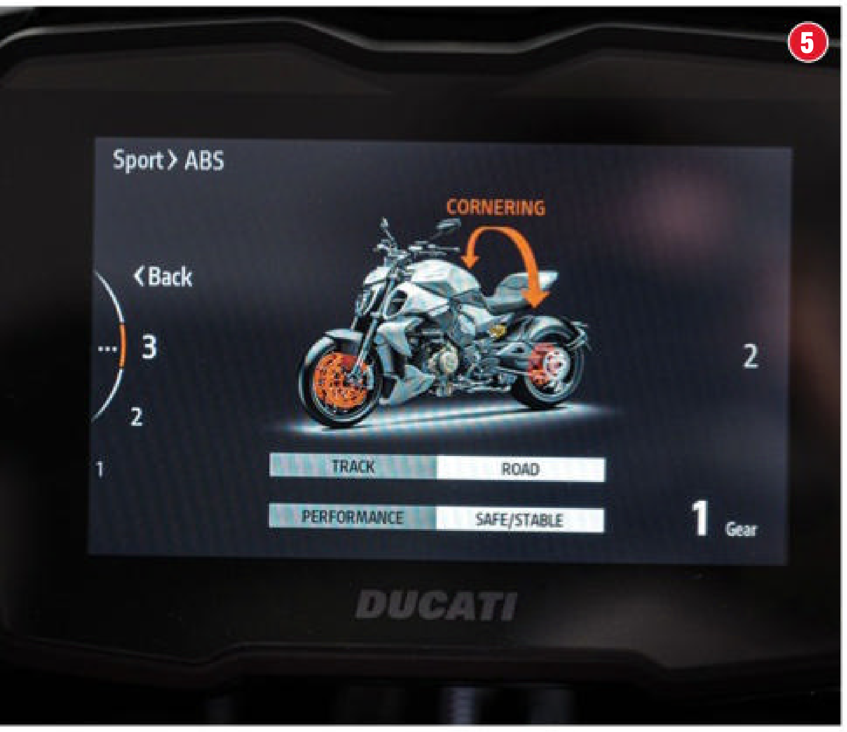
Four clustered exhaust exits protrude from the main silencer and instantly inform the passer-by that this is the new Diavel. The V4 version. The neat rear fold-down 'pegs are a nice touch, as are the hidden-away grabrail and matrix of LEDs that form the taillight. Ducati has stayed with the V-twin's unique 240-section rear Pirelli, which gives it a seriously muscular appearance, while the overall finish and feel are as you'd expect of a premium Ducati. Superb.

One press of the starter button and the new V4 barks into life. At tickover the rear two cylinders are deactivated to reduce heat to the rider and save on fuel (Ducati reckons this results in around a six percent saving). In first gear, all four cylinders are always active, but in the higher ratios it's only above 4000rpm – or when your right wrist demands a large helping of torque – that all four cylinders kick in. The transition is smooth, but you can hear a change in the exhaust pitch when all four pots come to play.

Peak torque might be slightly down compared to the V-twin, but you'd never pick it. The V4 Diavel pulls cleanly from low rpm and is effortlessly smooth compared to the twin. And when you want to have fun it will happily oblige and rev fluently towards the red line.

Don't misinterpret the Diavel's 'cruiser' looks, because this is one quick bike. In fact, its relatively long wheelbase combined with that fat, grippy rear Pirelli tyre and excellent electronics, including launch control, allow you to put the power down and make full use of the V4.

It isn't just a straightliner either. The new



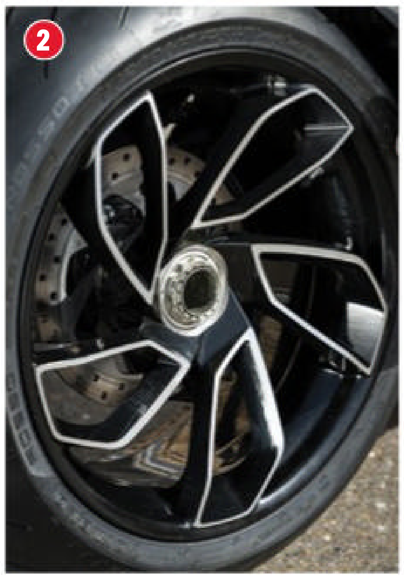
Diavel handles superbly and is a noticeable step above the old bike when it hits the twisties. With that 13kg mass reduction it feels far lighter than before, much more comparable to a large Ducati Monster and unlike any other cruiser on the market. It handles like a sporty nakedbike – and a really good one at that.

The new Diavel chassis and engine seem to carry more energy. The counter-rotating crank spins quicker, while the repositioned centre of mass helps it steer faster and with more accuracy. For a bike that has been designed, at least in part, as a muscular status symbol, it's incredibly agile and light handling, especially when you consider that huge rear section Pirelli. Yeah, eventually the 'pegs will touch down, but even when they do the Ducati doesn't feel like it is on the limit. It's un-shakeably stable and the new suspension gives such thorough feedback it almost makes the excellent rider aids surplus to requirements.

Our road test did have the benefit of near-perfect riding conditions in Dubai, racetrack-like grip and never-ending corners. I'm sure the rider aids will be beneficial in less-than-perfect conditions, especially in the wet. But on the test, I only felt the anti-wheelie kick in from time to time, and I eventually turned it off to have some fun.

The handling and ease of use of the new Diavel

IT'S INCREDIBLY AGILE AND LIGHT HANDLING, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU CONSIDER THAT HUGE REAR SECTION PIRELLI



1. Even the high-mount turn signals look delectable

2. Unique cast-alloy wheels, with Ducati maintaining the 240-section rear tyre

3. And away we go with Ducati's launch-control system

4. Four outlets send an overt message that it's a V4

5. Suspension is by Marzocchi

6. Pillion comfort is an improvement over the V-twin model

ONE-ON-ONE STEFANO TARABUSI

A quick yarn with the Diavel's product manager

Why move from a V-twin to a V4? For cost or Euro 5?

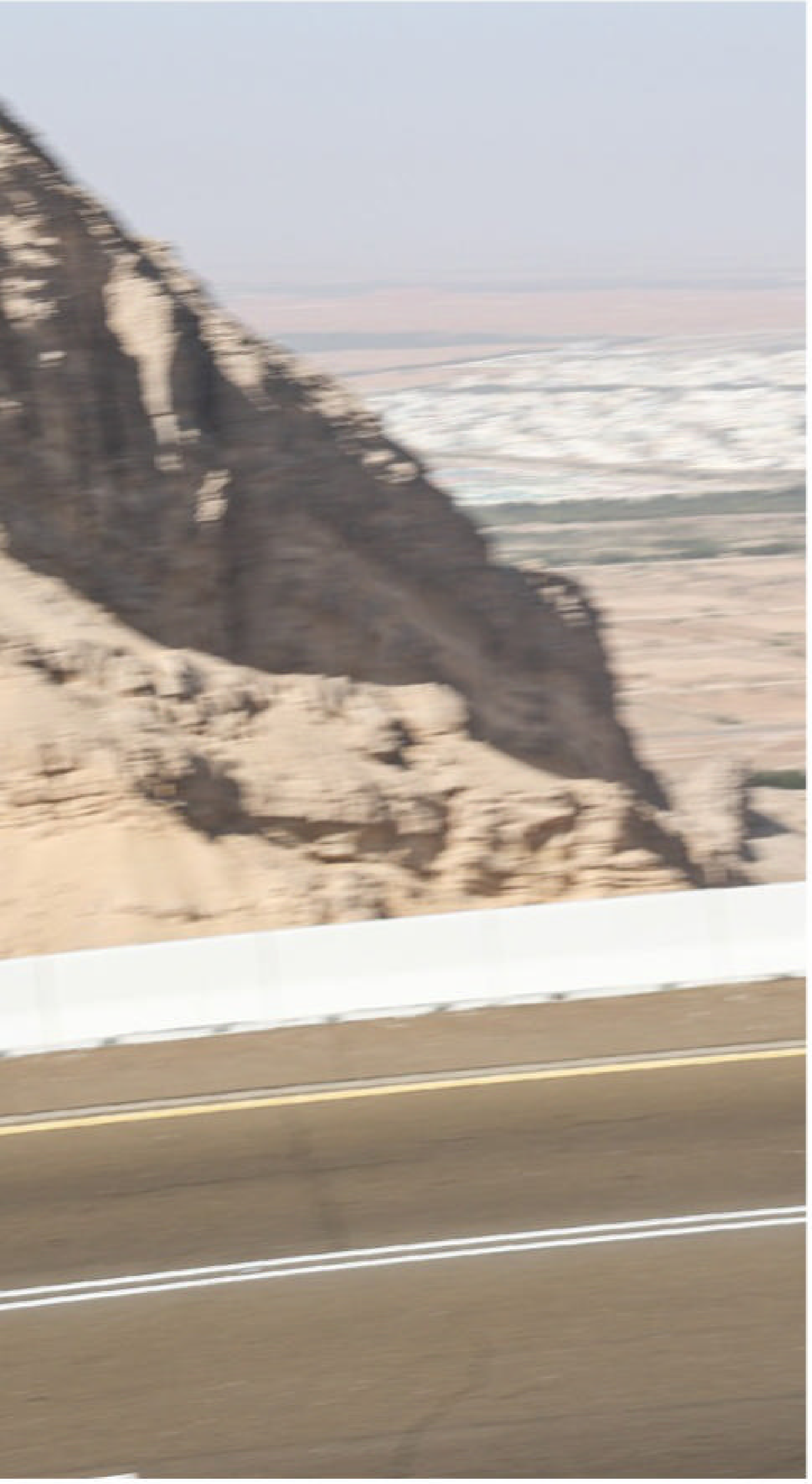
No, not cost or Euro 5; the engine fits perfectly in this motorcycle. The V4 is a fantastic engine and we now use the V4, with, let's say high-power Ducati bikes above 155hp and we remain V-twin below that.

Is this the same V4 as in the Multistrada?

The new Rally has a similar engine, which cuts power to the rear two cylinders below 4000rpm, depending on the gear and torque request (at the throttle). The intake, exhaust and mapping are different, and first gear, but internals are the same.

Can we expect to see a limited-edition S or R version?

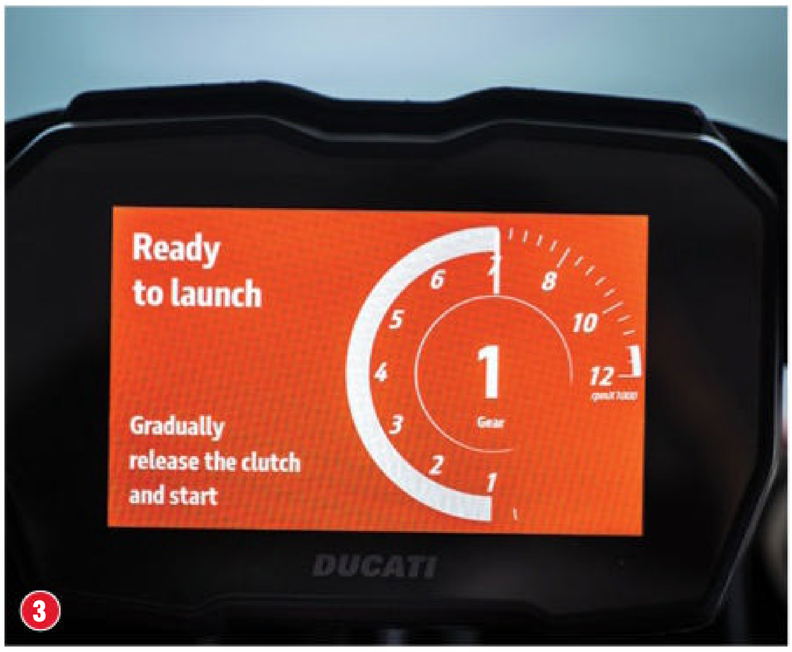
We only have this model, we are not planning a S version of a bike with semi-active suspension; this bike does so much and is versatile.



are a real surprise, but so are the upgraded Brembo Stylema stoppers. These are similar to what you find on a racebike, yet here they are on a laidback and comfortable cruiser. A one-finger brush of the lever is all that is needed to haul up the beast as you pilot through town or along your favourite mountain road. If you want to test your bravery, grab a handful of front brakes and rely on the cornering ABS… like me, you will be amazed at what you can get away with.

Our route was mainly determined so we could test the performance and handling of the new Diavel, not its overall comfort. That said, the extra travel of the suspension and large seat should make the bike comfier than before. I always found the Diavel V-twin to be a bit of a stretch, but now the ’bars are closer to the rider by 20mm, while the seat height remains relatively low at 790mm, despite being 35mm higher than before. I even jumped on the back to sample the larger pillion seat, neat little fold-out rear ’pegs and grabrail – and it wasn’t bad, again an improvement over the old bike. Cruise control comes as standard, too, so fit some touring accessories like luggage, a screen and heated grips and you can churn out some big miles in absolute comfort.

Despite its aggressive looks and somewhat intimidating 240-section rear Pirelli, the V4 Diavel



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LAID-BACK & LAIRY

When quick cruising is your bag

TRIUMPH ROCKET 3 R
2500cc inline three-cylinder
291kg (dry)
$34,450 (ride away)

HARLEY-DAVIDSON SPORTSTER S
1252cc V-twin
225kg (wet)
$26,495 (ride away)

INDIAN SCOUT
1133cc V-twin
256kg (wet)
$22,995

6

SPECS

ENGINE
Capacity 1158cc
Type V4, four valves per cylinder
Bore & stroke 83mm x 53.5mm
Compression ratio 14.0:1
Cooling Liquid
Fueling EFI, 46mm throttle bodies
Transmission Six-speed
Clutch Wet, multi-plate, slipper
Final drive Chain

PERFORMANCE
Power 125kW (168hp) @ 10,750rpm (claimed)
Torque 126Nm @ 7500rpm (claimed)
Top speed 250km/h (est)
Fuel consumption 6.4L/100km (claimed)

ELECTRONICS
Type Not given
Rider aids Power modes, Cornering ABS, Ducati Traction Control, Ducati Wheelie Control, Ducati Quick Shift, Ducati Power Launch, cruise control
Rider modes Sport, Touring, Urban and Wet

CHASSIS
Frame material Aluminium
Frame type Monocoque
Rake 26°
Trail 112mm
Wheelbase 1593mm

SUSPENSION
Type Marzocchi
Front: 50mm upside-down fork, fully adjustable, 120mm travel
Rear: Monoshock, fully adjustable, 145mm travel

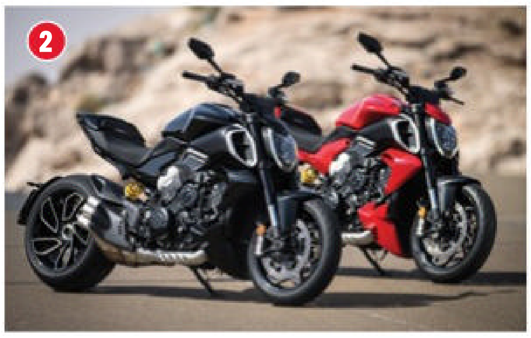
WHEELS & BRAKES
Wheels Cast alloy
Front: 17 x 3.5 Rear: 17 x 8.0
Tyres Pirelli Rosso 3
Front: 120/70ZR17
Rear: 240/45ZR17
Brakes Brembo, cornering ABS
Front: Twin 330mm discs, four-piston Stylema calipers
Rear: Single 265mm disc, twin-piston caliper

DIMENSIONS
Weight 236kg (kerb, claimed)
Seat height 790mm
Width Not given
Height Not given
Length Not given
Ground clearance Not given
Fuel capacity 20L

SERVICING & WARRANTY
Servicing First: 1000km
Minor: 15,000km
Major: 60,000km
Warranty Two years, unlimited kilometres

BUSINESS END
Price $41,100 (ride away)
Colour options Ducati Red or Thrilling Black (+$400)

CONTACT
www.ducati.com/au/en



1. The launch route in Dubai was an absolute corker!

2. Two liveries to choose from for the monocoque-framed muscle machine

3. Geared to hit an estimated 250km/h: impressive for a power cruiser

4. Potent Brembo Stylema brakes have added to the dynamic package

is easy to ride. It fits all sizes and is a pussycat to manoeuvre and balance at low speeds. In damp or cold conditions the electronic rider aids will be hugely advantageous and, being a Ducati, will be virtually perfect, too. Newer or more cautious riders can even reduce the V4's output in Urban and Wet modes to an extremely user-friendly 86kW (115hp).

In fact, while AMCN spent most of the ride pushing the limits of the Diavel V4's handling and performance – and, I have to say, having amazing fun – in the real world, many Diavels will be used for genuine cruising duties and looking good around town en route to the shops. Thankfully, it's just as good at the everyday stuff as it is at weekend heroics and the looks and sound of the thing will turn heads wherever it goes.

I was expecting a Ducati Diavel with a V4 engine and a machine that was marginally sportier than before; an improvement, sure, but not a big step. I was wrong. This is a big step over the old twin-cylinder Diavel, which is itself a very accomplished performer.

The new monocoque chassis makes a huge difference. It feels considerably lighter, much more agile with a sportier edge. A steeper head angle, the reduction in weight, the counter-rotating crank all add up to produce a staggeringly agile muscle bike.

IT REVS TO THE HEAVENS THE WAY FEW ENGINES CAN WHEN YOU FEEL IN THE MOOD

Then there are the improvements to the brakes, which are phenomenal. There are improved rider aids and electronics, an attractive and functional new design plus a much improved dash.

And, of course, there's the new Granturismo V4, which fits perfectly with this bike. It's smooth, soft, perfectly fueled, has buckets of torque and it revs to the heavens the way few engines can when you feel in the mood.

Starting at $41,100 (ride away), the only downside is the price. But this is a fun, versatile, attractive and desirable bike. If you want one of the best, I guess you have to pay for it.

PROS AND CONS

👍 It's Ducati, it's the Diavel, the V4 has a new home, 13kg weight loss: were we really in any doubt? It's magic.

👎 We'd be nitpicking to the extreme about features that are down to personal taste. It is a wallet strainer, though.

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TEST **PETE VORST** + PHOTOGRAPHY **INCITE IMAGES**

BMW's S 1000 R is one of the sweetest-handling bikes you can park your carcass on, and the spicy S 1000 R M-Sport make makes it that much sweeter again

Most bikes take time. They take time for the rider to get used to the handling, the brakes, the seating position or the way the power kicks in. Hell, if you've owned a Buell, B-King or Bimota Mantra it probably took you time to get used to the look. Even the superhuman MotoGP riders need time to get used to a different engine configuration or to come to terms with the differences between a production-based superbike and the madness that is a MotoGP machine.

We mere mortals are no different and it's usually not until we're truly comfortable that, if so inclined, we feel we can start exploring the limits of the machine underneath us – or, more likely, our own limits. In my experience there are very few bikes that relinquish this 'getting to know you' period before things begin to gel, but BMW's S 1000 R M-Sport is one of those rare beasts. From the first ride I felt comfortable, capable and right at home.

This isn't a trait new to BMW's S 1000 R of all vintages. The first model was brilliant, the current model released in 2021 better again and, with a whole swag of spicy go-faster and go-safer bits bolted on and wired in, the

M-Sport lifts the S 1000 R's game another notch. The question is: is it worth the extra moolah? Yeah, I reckon that it is.

The S 1000 R M-Sport will set you back $30,290 (plus on-road costs) if you don't select any of the delectable bolt-on bits in the options catalogue – that's $9000 more than a stocker. You could buy a stock S 1000 R and a G 310 GS for less than that and do some adventure riding when you're not screaming around on your 1000cc nakedbike. But I simply wouldn't.

The M-Sport comes loaded with the obligatory M package which includes an M Endurance chain that sports a Diamond-like Carbon (DLC) coating that reduces friction to improve performance and wear resistance; BMW's M GPS Lap Trigger; a snazzy Akrapovic sports muffler; a pretty embroidered M-Sport seat; a lithium battery that's 2.9kg lighter than the standard version; and the *pièce de resistance*: a set of lightweight carbon wheels which shaves another 3.7kg off the standard weight.

But before you get too excited about the carbon wheels, BMW has moved the goalposts. The bike on test is the mid-2022 model, but since then the M 1000 R has been unveiled – complete with carbon wheels – and to elevate the M 1000 R to the very top of the heap, the S 1000 R M-Sport is no longer available with carbon wheels as standard. It now comes with forged wheels, which are still a not-insignificant 2kg lighter than the standard version – bringing the total weight down to a claimed 196kg (wet) while also shaving $2210 off the price tag, so it's not all bad.

The M-Sport is also crammed with the Dynamic package that comes with Shift Assistant Pro, Dynamic Damping Control (DDC), the Dynamic

1
MY VEHICLE
DYNAMIC PRO
11:30

3
AKRAPOVIČ

1. It's a comprehensive dash alright, with a mountain of premium tech to showcase

2. Friendly and refined, but with a rollicking top end

3. The Akrapovic silencer is standard on the S 1000 R M-Sport

OWNER'S OPINION
SEAN MOONEY

THE FIRST thing to say is if you like the look and specs of the latest S 1000 R M-Sport and you're thinking of buying one, just do it. It's a fabulous bike and I highly doubt you'll be disappointed.

My journey to S 1000 R ownership was a convoluted one. Having owned a bunch of retro-style nakeds, sportsbikes, tourers and even adventure bikes over the years, I have always been comfortable riding different styles of machines. It's about enjoying their unique qualities and being happy that you are on something well engineered and with two wheels.

But when I decided that I wanted to get back into trackdays after many years away, my choices narrowed considerably. I also wanted the bike to be road legal so, long story short, I decided the Teutonic perfection of the latest S 1000 RR was probably the best bet for me. So, I test rode one and absolutely loved the engine, but was less happy with the riding position - particularly the weight on my wrists and cramped leg room for my 188cm frame.

The S 1000 R was suggested to me, but the styling of the older models never grabbed me and, while the new one looked better to me (not everyone agrees), I still found it a bit bland. However riding it was a revelation; so much like its faired brother (I know, minus the Shiftcam tech for the extra horses, mostly over 10,000rpm, but I'm not a fast enough rider to notice), but with such civility, comfort and on-road manners. I knew it was the right choice for me for both road and track.

I just needed (well, wanted) a bit more pizazz, so I went for the M-Sport with its extra bling... and voila - a fantastic-looking bike, more than capable on both road and track, complete with cruise control, heated grips, buckets of tech and a top-class TFT dash. It still amazes me how well this bike does everything (perhaps except for off-road touring, but I'm sure someone out there is doing it!).

When Covid lockdowns came around, I might have gone a bit

BLAZING SADDLES

There's no denying the M-Sport's sporting heritage but, for a six-foot plus cove like me, it's a comfortable ride with a seat that's even comfier than some sports-tourers I've ridden.

VIEW IT ON THE BIG SCREEN

The M-Sport is packed with enough technology to cause an aneurism with all the info coming to you via the spacious TFT dash. There's so much tech it'll take some learning.

SHOCKS THAT SHOCK

The electronic Marzocchi suspension works in combination with the ride modes and senses road conditions to deliver automatic damping adjustments on the fly.

THE CARBON CYCLE

Our test machine was fitted with carbon-fibre wheels that stripped a hefty 3.7kg off the weight of the standard machine. Sadly, they are no longer an option, but lightweight forged wheels are.

STOP, THIEF!

The M-Sport's aluminium 'flex frame' and swingarm are nicked straight off the S 1000 RR. The rear shock sits 20mm further away from the engine to reduce the effects of heat.

Pro ride mode, an engine spoiler and you also get a rear seat and pillion 'pegs should you be interested in traumatising someone into taking the step of unfriending you on Facebook.

On a slightly less exciting note, the M-Sport also comes with an adaptive headlight, daytime running lights, tyre pressure monitoring and the Comfort package, which offers goodies like heated grips and cruise control. And lastly, but certainly not least, the high-end Beemer comes with M-Sport paint job that's exclusive to the firm's M-Sport models.

Underneath all the fancy goodness the S 1000 R M-Sport is the same as the standard model. It's 999cc inline-four is based on the S 1000 RR – sans Shiftcam, which is reserved for the M 1000 R – and produces 121kW (165hp) at 11,000rpm and 114Nm of torque at 9250rpm. And it is housed in the same S 1000 RR-derived bridge-type aluminium frame that continues to use the liquid-cooled mill as a stressed member.

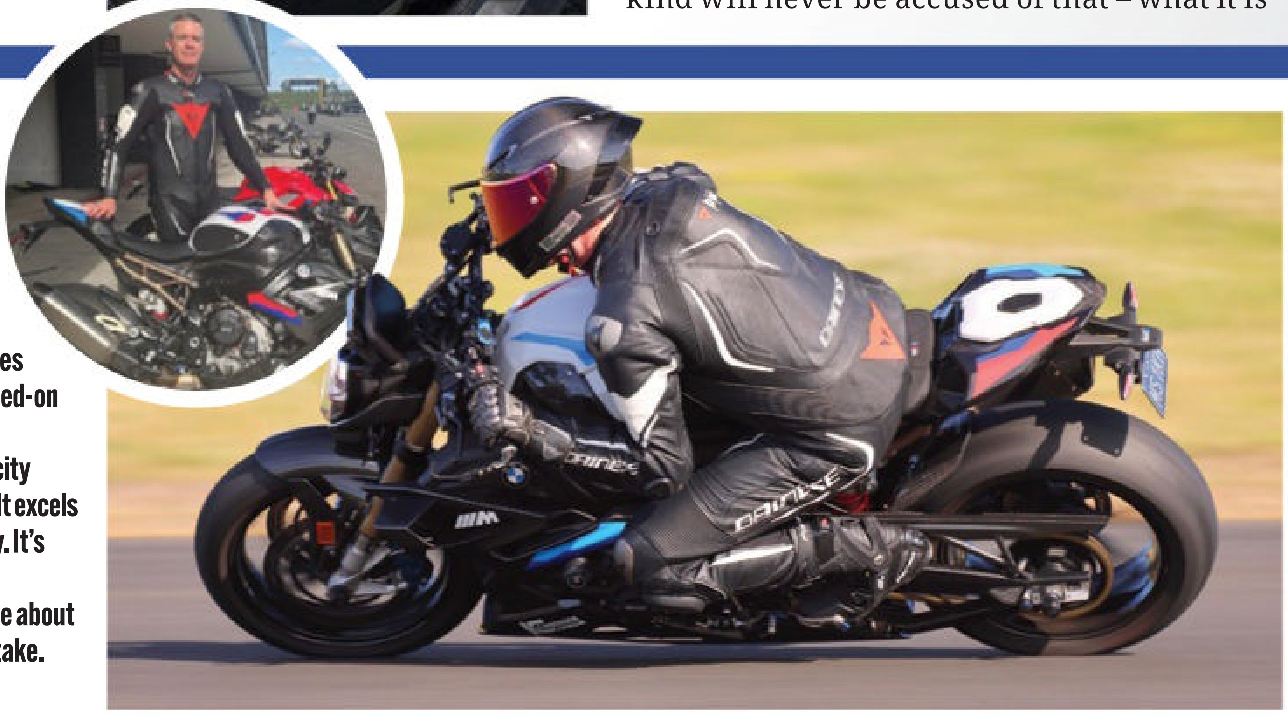
According to BMW, the M-Sport is making 80Nm by 3000rpm. There's certainly enough on tap to make the Beemer a useful mount down low in the revs and it'll happily doodle around in sixth gear at 60km/h without fuss. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that this supernaked is docile at low revs or, if I may be so bold, uninspiring, especially compared to the likes of Ducati's Streetfighter V4, KTM's Super Duke R, or Yamaha's MT-10 that are like caged dogs waiting to launch at you off the bottom. I'm not suggesting it's slow – a litre-class bike of any kind will never be accused of that – what it is

ITS 999cc FOUR IS BASED ON THE S 1000 RR - SANS SHIFTCAM

overboard killing time by fitting aftermarket carbon-fibre (including some sexy winglets), M-style stickers, crash protection and even blue M-spec brakes - but I like how it has come up. In fact, it looks so much like the new black M 1000 R that I wondered if I'd been hosting a German spy in my garage at some point. Of course, the specs are very different, now that the M 1000 R shares all its engine goodies with the S 1000 RR - although I'm not a fan of the huge, bolted-on winglets on the new M 1000 R.

In terms of liveability, my bike has proven to be a versatile city commuter, top twisty tamer and great trackday companion. It excels in all these areas, with nary a mechanical issue along the way. It's also excellent eye candy with its bundles of bling.

I thought it was the perfect bike for me. That is until I rode about 1000km on the Ducati Streetfighter V4 S recently. Big mistake. But that's a story for another day...



1

2

3

4

5

NAKED RIVALS

THE PORK AND PACE RACE

KTM 1290 SUPER DUKE R EVO

Engine 1301cc V-twin
Power 132kW (177hp)
Torque 140Nm
Weight 191kg (dry)
$32,115

APRILIA TUONO V4 FACTORY

Engine 1077cc V4
Power 129kW (175hp)
Torque 121Nm
Weight 209kg (kerb)
$30,330

DUCATI STREETFIGHTER V4 S

Engine 1103cc V4
Power 153kW (208hp)
Torque 123Nm
Weight 180kg (dry)
$39,000

YAMAHA MT-10 SP

Engine 998cc inline-four
Power 122kW (165.9hp)
Torque 112Nm
Weight 214kg (wet)
$28,499

1. If that doesn't whet the nakedbike appetite, nothing will...

2. The rear suspension with Dynamic Damping Control, which makes adjustments at 10-millisecond intervals

3. Brembo brakes, as expected, produce stellar stopping power

4. No winglets on the M-Sport version of the S 1000 R – well, not yet anyway

5. From 9000rpm, the inline-four really takes off

though is friendly, refined and infinitely useable.

But make no bones about it: the M-Sport is at its best when the revs are spinning with vigour. Get the four-banger up above 6000rpm and it starts to get exciting, get it up around the 9000 mark and you best hold on because shit gets real very fast. With less than 200kg to push around and with torque and power curves that are both quite linear, the M-Sport builds speed with a definite rush – but it's a plush rush without any discernible kicks in the delivery. It's the blurred landscape in your peripheral vision and the obscene speed beamed back at you from the dash that really spell out just how fast the M-Sport is.

The S 1000 R is the quintessential four-cylinder – it has the monster top-end rush but with a more fruity and usable low and midrange power which make it a far more pleasant roadbike than its S 1000 RR sibling.

Keeping the whole show on the road is a 45mm electronically controlled Marzocchi fork that regulates damping control based on the riding conditions and mode selected. The rear monoshock uses the same DDC electronic system that senses changes in road conditions and makes adjustments to the internal valves at intervals of around 10 milliseconds.

The adjustments are so precise and so frequent that only a better rider than I could notice the change, suffice to say that it's so good you don't notice the system is working to keep the M-Sport sorted irrespective of the road surface.

What you certainly can notice is the change in damping characteristic between modes – flick from Rain or Road mode into either Dynamic or Dynamic Pro and the suspension is noticeably firmer. For road riding on the poor excuse for roads in New South Wales, Road mode is the go with the softer damping helping to keep things smooth and throwing off the challenge of mid-corner craters without upsetting your style.

If you're out challenging your mates for pole position on your favourite back road, switching to the more track-focused modes (Dynamic or Dynamic Pro) is the go. While it certainly firms things up, the DDC is sophisticated enough to still take the edge off bone-jarring jolts. If you want to wrestle a bit of control back from Hal 9000 (the fictional artificial intelligence character in the *Space Odyssey* series for those less nerdy than I), Dynamic Pro mode lets you trim the suspension settings to suit your taste.

I don't want to, but I'm about to use that overused term 'intuitive' again. I have to because it's the best way to describe the M-Sport's handling. It really is as though all you have to do is think about hooking through a turn and, voila, you're out the other side. At road speeds at least, I can't pinpoint an area where the M-Sport's handling can't be described as anything but brilliant. Turn in? A small input through the 'bar and it's on its ear, and it'll stay on said ear until you say otherwise. Need to change orbit mid-turn? Easy!

NEED TO CHANGE ORBIT MID-TURN? EASY! THE M-SPORT IS SERIOUSLY THAT GOOD

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THE M-SPORT PROVIDES A CONFIDENCE THAT HAS YOU ACTING RATHER THAN PANICKING

STRIP OFF!

Don't miss our upcoming hypernaked comparison test in AMCN Vol 72 No 18 where we'll let the M-Sport have it out with the best machines in the class.

It's seriously that good.

The ultimate test of neutral handling is how well you can string a set of corners together on a road you don't know when you have a couple of mates putting pressure on you from behind. I had that scenario unfold on the M-Sport. And sure, I overcooked a few corners and mucked up more lines than a dyslexic choir, but during the error-recovery process I was always in control. The M-Sport provides a confidence that has you acting rather than panicking when you make a mistake. The only thing I didn't like was the far too many occasions when I exited a corner thinking 'I could have hit that way faster'.

The Brembo stoppers are partly to blame for that. The M-Sport is fitted with twin 320mm discs with a pair of four-piston calipers on the front and a single-piston caliper gripping a 220mm disc on the bum. The matte black Brembos look like rebadged Tokicos and they work brilliantly. The light lever provides plenty of feedback and the whole package has excellent power. The front brakes lack the eye-popping power of the Ducati Streetfighter's top-shelf Stylema calipers, but they are still brutally good.

It goes without saying that a flagship model like the M-Sport is fitted with all the electronic trinkets in the book. Cornering ABS, cornering traction control, hill-start assist, two-way quickshifter, ride modes and the list goes on.

All these and more are live streamed to you via the BMW's big, bold 6.5-inch TFT screen that is as clear and easy to read as it is spacious – a visit to Dick Smith for the right dongle and you could probably binge watch Netflix on the thing. The

1. Pete's motorcycle bread-and-butter was made a whole lot easier on the M Sport

2. BMW's signature collar to manage the dash functions

3. The 'M' branding is only a few years old, but it's already developed enourmous cachet

4. All angles and edgy styling

SPECS

ENGINE
Capacity 999cc
Type Inline-four, four valves per cylinder
Bore & stroke 80mm x 49.7mm
Compression ratio 12.5:1
Cooling Liquid
Fueling EFI
Transmission Six-speed
Clutch Wet, multi-plate, slipper
Final drive Chain

PERFORMANCE
Power 121kW (165hp) @ 11,000rpm (claimed)
Torque 114Nm @ 9250rpm (claimed)
Top speed 280km/h (est)
Fuel consumption 5.7L/100km (measured)

ELECTRONICS
Type Bosch
Rider aids ABS Pro, Dynamic Traction Control, Race ABS, Gear Shift Assist Pro, Dynamic Engine Brake Control, cruise control, Hill Start Control Pro, Headlight Pro, TPMS, Gear Shift Pro, DDC, heated grips, GPS-Laptrigger, wheelie control, engine drag torque control, launch control, pitlane limiter
Rider modes Rain, Road, Dynamic and Dynamic Pro

CHASSIS
Frame material Aluminium alloy
Frame type Bridge
Rake 24°
Trail 96.3mm
Wheelbase 1450mm

SUSPENSION
Type Marzocchi
Front: 45mm USD fork, DDC, 120mm travel
Rear: Monoshock, DDC, 117mm travel

WHEELS & BRAKES
Wheels Forged
Front: 17 x 3.5 Rear: 17 x 6.0
Tyres Pirelli Diablo Rosso II Corsa
Front: 120/70ZR17
Rear: 200/55ZR17
Brakes Brembo, ABS
Front: Twin 320mm discs, four-piston calipers
Rear: Single 220mm disc, single-piston caliper

DIMENSIONS
Weight 196kg (wet, claimed)
Seat height 830mm
Width 812mm
Height 1115mm
Length 2090mm
Ground clearance Not given
Fuel capacity 16.5L

SERVICING & WARRANTY
Servicing First: 1000km
Minor: 10,000km
Major: 30,000km
Warranty Five years, unlimited kilometres

BUSINESS END
Price $30,290 (plus on roads)
Colour: Light white/M Motorsport

CONTACT
www.bmw-motorrad.com.au

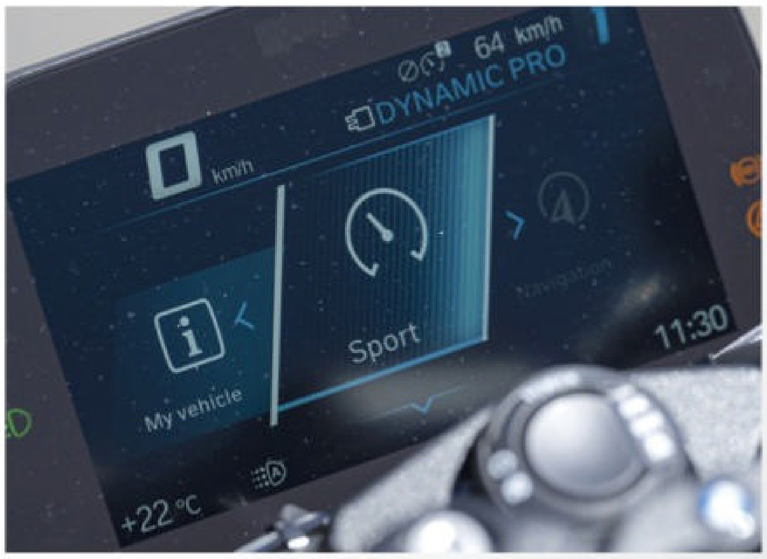
THE INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY IS REALLY QUITE ASTONISHING

dash is loaded with a Bluetooth interface that connects to a smart device with extra features such as turn-by-turn navigation. There are so many functions, screens and pieces of info I'd need another eight pages to describe each feature. It's easy to become blasé about the user displays on modern bikes but, with the amount of information, adjustment and technology at your fingertips, it is really quite astonishing.

There's so much tech in the S 1000 R M-Sport it is about the only area of the bike that takes some getting used to, and I found it a mental drain reading through and researching all the whiz-bangery. However it's something you'd learn to use and appreciate if you owned one.

The only negative thing I can think to say about the S 1000 R M-Sport is that it lacks the adrenaline-pumping punch and hooligan character of every other supernaked I've ridden. That's if it's even a negative trait, because it carries itself with a civility that the others just can't match. Everything about the BMW works like a beautifully crafted German timepiece. I'm not going to say it's boring, because it's not. Anyway, anyone who ever says a litre-class supernaked of any flavour is boring should be treated with absolute suspicion.

So, after such a glowing review, would I buy one? Absolutely not. And not because it's expensive and lacking a little bit of character. It's because I saw the M 1000 R – it has carbon wheels.



PROS AND CONS

One of the most beautifully balanced roadbikes ever. It's got every bit of tech you could ever want and the carbon wheels (that you can't get any more) are stunning!

Very clinical and lacks a bit of character. All that tech can be confusing, and the sheer volume of it overwhelming. The carbon wheels aren't available anymore – boo!

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2023 WORLDSBK

IT'S GAME ON!

Every team, every rider, every championship and every round. This is everything you need to know about the WorldSBK season that's **about to unfold**

aruba.it
DUCATI
4
REVIT!
aruba
SIDI

A fulsome and determined group of human beings, teams and manufacturers are about to form a rowdy congregation of worship at one of the truly great temples of speed, Phillip Island. WorldSBK Championship success is their shared aim, so let's introduce you to the men who will be pastors (or paupers) in 2023.

Team **Aruba.it Ducati**

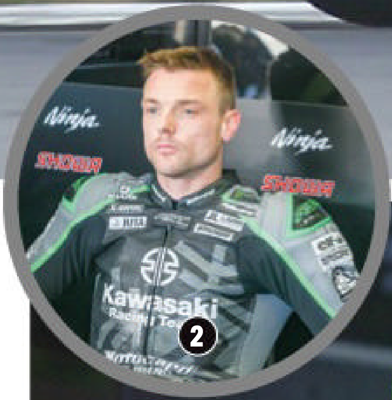
Riders **Alvaro Bautista & Michael Ruben Rinaldi**

Bautista and Rinaldi finished first and fourth in the 2022 World Championship, but the former was on another planet as he won his first title. And he really won it in the end, with both room and revs to spare.

With a revamped Panigale V4 R engine under their right hand for 2023, including the spectre of an improved package in slower turns, even the mega talents of Toprak Razgatlioglu and Jonathan Rea will be in deep trouble once again.

Rinaldi's task is simple this year: keep his ride for 2024. To do that he will have to make the big three into a big four, beat Bautista's rivals as often as he can and win races for himself along the way. No easy suite of tasks, but his own stated ambition is the championship win.

1



2

3

Team Pata Yamaha WorldSBK Team
Riders Toprak Razgatlioglu & Andrea Locatelli

Razgatlioglu and Locatelli are again the highest-pitched tuning forks in the wider Yamaha orchestra, with Razgatlioglu the 2021 champion and Locatelli the 2020 WorldSSP grand master before making his WorldSBK debut in 2021. Neither need an introduction, but to truly challenge Bautista and Ducati in 2023 Razgatlioglu needs his bike to grow some bigger peaks in power and push - while retaining its renowned rideability. His pure talent feels limitless, but even he can't outbrake a phantom if he is too far ahead on the straights.

Locatelli was a top-five rider last year, but he faces much the same dilemma as Rinaldi. Proving to be a very good rider but not leaping forward enough in an era with three stars in a distant galaxy from everyone else. Man, he works hard at his craft though, under the crew chiefery of Aussie former world champion Andrew Pitt.

Team Kawasaki Racing Team
Riders Jonathan Rea & Alex Lowes

Rea, Kawasaki's very own GOAT, is an awesome WorldSBK beast to see going about its work. But last year the six-time world champion was not second in the championship but third. He may be the best and most complete rider of them all, even now, but we will only see the proof of that if the changes made to his Ninja ZX-10RR are enough to let him compete without having to override too often. Last year, that necessity led to just a few wins by his standards (still six!), too many points lost and no repeat of his 2019 comeback title win because Bautista and Co. didn't mess it up this time.

Lowes is spookily like the other 'Big Three' factory team 'second' riders, looking to split that triumvirate up for a whole season. He was third overall in 2019, so he's shown it can be done.

Team Team HRC
Riders Iker Lecuona & Xavi Vierge

Unlike this time last year, Lecuona and Vierge are no longer rookies. Lecuona already has a pole position and podium to boast about on the tricky Fireblade. This year Honda's CBR100RR- R SP should be different enough in its WorldSBK chassis modifications to make use of its already highly potent inline-four engine. If it's not, then it will be an uphill slalom again for both the factory Honda guys. If the chassis mods make it easier to ride and use in real world situations, we will see if the controversial riding choice of 2022 will prove to be a really wise one this year. Fourth year for the precision-made Honda; it has to prove its worth more than the second-year riders do.

Team Rokit BMW Motorrad Team WorldSBK
Riders Scott Redding & Michael van der Mark

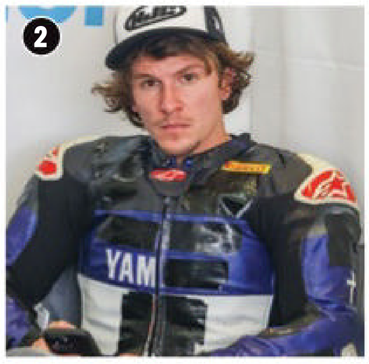
Redding and van der Mark are both top riders, even if VDM had a terrible season with injuries and interruptions last year. Redding proved his true worth - and the high potential of the M 1000 RR - with podiums last season, albeit after a shocker of a start in Motorland at Round 1. A new-ish M 1000 RR for 2023, mostly festooned with aerodynamic mods you simply can't miss, has some cut-and-shut engine mounting changes (a first for WorldSBK at the end of 2022), but so far the combinations do not look like matching the Panigale Redding rode in 2021, nor (in relative terms) the YZF-R1 VDM rode to third place in 2018. VDM has won a race on the Beemer in 2021, and Redding very nearly last year, so time will tell on the latest spec. Everybody wants BMW (and Honda) to be right up there; even many of their rivals see the overall benefits that would bring...

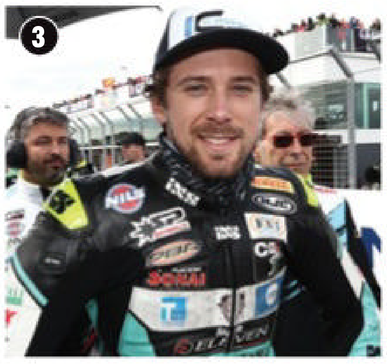
Team MotoCorsa Racing Ducati
Rider Axel Bassani

The best independent team rider of 2022 is still an independent team rider, which was not in his plan for 2023. But he has a good team, a lot of talent, a good V4 R and, importantly, another year of experience against the best. He is in a better position than most, to be fair. What he does not have yet is that last one percent of gold dust that full-on race winners sprinkle about the place, so we will see if he can alchemise some of that for himself very soon.

HE DOES NOT HAVE YET THAT LAST ONE PERCENT OF GOLD DUST THAT RACE WINNERS SPRINKLE ABOUT THE PLACE

1. Ratzatlioglu, undoubtedly the most exciting WorldSBK rider to watch **2.** Can Lowes score a win or two in 2023? **3.** Rea's shooting for crown number seven **4.** With a year of WorldSBK under his belt, Lecuona is ready to pounce **5.** Vierge has shown rare glimpses of his talent on the factory Honda **6.** Van der Mark is now fit after an injury-riddled 2022 **7.** The factory Ducati team at its 2023 launch **8.** Van Der Mark **9.** The freshly married Redding





1. Hallelujah! An Aussie back in WorldSBK full-time. And Gardner has already shown strong pace

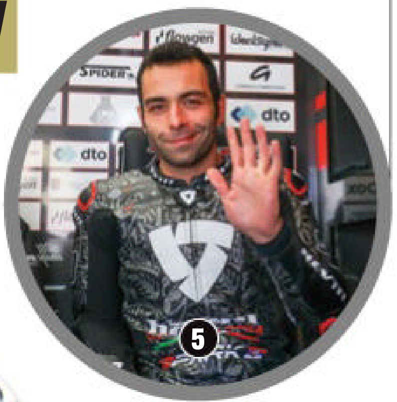
2. Gerloff's had a couple of lean years, but a new team might just be the release valve he needs

3. German Philipp Öttl

4. Gardner and Yamaha teammate, Aegerter

5. Petrucci's back in the same paddock where his road racing career really began to take off

> **WANDERED THE MOTOGP WASTELANDS AND THEN MADE THE DESERT BLOOM NOT ONCE BUT TWICE**



Team GYTR GRT Yamaha
Riders Remy Gardner & Dominique Aegerter

Now we're talking... If we are looking for two new wild cats to throw into the pigeons and see who gets plucked the hardest then the dominant double WorldSSP champion Aegerter (32 years fast) and 2021 Moto2 World Champion Gardner (24 years determined) is maybe the most exciting line up of all. Aegerter was sixth fastest in a recent Jerez test, Gardner 10th... Both have a lot to prove in their first year of WorldSBK, too. Just as well they have 'nearly factory' bikes under Yamaha's extended support scheme.

Team Bonovo Action BMW
Riders Loris Baz & Garrett Gerloff

Baz will turn 30 before we even get to PI and has proven over and over again that when things work well, he can podium. And win, as he has done in the past. If the new BMW is a step-up, then the fundamentally four official bike Beemer philosophy may be kindest of all to Baz.

Gerloff makes a restart to what was once a very promising WorldSBK career, which has of course already included multiple podiums. A fresh start for Captain America, hand-picked by new joint team owner Eugene Laverty, may be just what he needs.

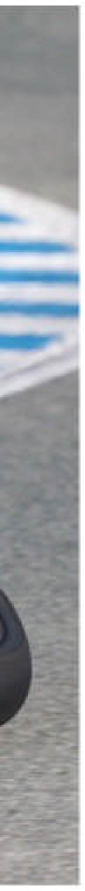
Another two-rider semi-factory flying squad.

Team Team GoEleven Ducati
Rider Philipp Öttl

Öttl is another strong Moto2 and WorldSSP rider, and already in WorldSBK in 2022. He wasn't bad at all, despite injury, but again a step-up is needed if he is likely to stay in the top production echelons.

Team Barni Spark Racing Ducati
Rider Danilo Petrucci

We confess to being excited by this fella, Petrucci. Who won't welcome back a one-time Superstock product who wandered the MotoGP wastelands and then made the desert bloom not once but twice on top of the biggest podiums of all. Dakar, MotoAmerica, MotoGP... he's been knocking about recently, but is already quick in a team that used to be the best of the non-factory rest.



Team Kawasaki Puccetti Racing
Rider Tom Sykes

The 2013 World Champion is now 37 years of age. He had a year out in British Superbike, and gathered a couple of race wins to brighten a whole heap of disappointment. He has now come back to WorldSBK with the privateer team that made Toprak Razgatlioglu a first-time race winner. What are Sykes' chances? Over a single lap? Maybe great. For the rest... The enigma will come wrapped in a riddle and delivered by mysterious means. But he is a world champion, y'know?

Team GMT 94 Yamaha
Rider Lorenzo Baldassarri

Lorenzo Baldassarri's time in WorldSSP lasted one year, and he's now made the switch to Christophe Guyot's just-so-French GMT94 privateer squad, but with guaranteed good support from Yamaha. Hard to know their chances at this stage, but ambition is not lacking from any part of the set-up. Everybody is happy that Christophe is in the big time, too.

Team MIE Racing Honda Team
Riders Hafizh Syahrin & Eric Granado

A two-rider line up sees one rider stay on from 2022, in the shape of a rare Malaysian WorldSBK talent, Hafizh Syahrin Bin Abdullah.

Granado, from Brazil, joins Midori Moriwaki's team to replace the outgoing Leandro Mercado. Their chances? Slim at best, but they should have much better bikes and closer ties to the works team. But time will tell with that.

8

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7

6. Loris Baz on the Bonovo BMW. What will the mercurial Frenchman bring in 2023?

7. Baldassarri joins WorldSBK after a strong rookie WorldSSP campaign in 2022

8. Syahrin has the ability to move forward, but will his satellite Honda let him?

9. Granado

10. Sykes is back in a paddock he never wanted to leave; watch out for some of his old qualifying magic to reappear

Team Orelac Racing VerdNatura Kawasaki
Rider Oliver König

Oliver König is back again, but the likeable young Czech rider cannot be expected to whip up miracles on a privateer Kawasaki.

Team Yamaha Motoxracing WorldSBK Team
Rider Bradley Ray

Some have been screaming out for young talents from BSB to get into WorldSBK for some time, and Shane Byrne's protege Bradley Ray comes into WorldSBK as the reigning British champion. His team won't (can't afford to) do the long hauls but it proved to be a more than decent force with old stager Roberto Tamburini in 2022.

10

WORLDSSP

SEASON PREVIEW **THE CAST OF 2023 WORLDSSP**

It's easy to get carried away, but this WorldSSP year looks epic even before a single brake disc has been bitten into

WorldSSP looks like it's going to be rock hard and full of potential podium chargers in 2023. And that's mostly because the top two riders have moved on; there have been saddle swaps; there's been an intake of MotoGP talent and new but experienced riders; and a few successful 300cc pups have arrived after outgrowing their previous pounds.

Team Ten Kate Racing Yamaha
Riders Jorge Navarro & Stefano Manzi

Navarro has just rolled in from Moto2, via Moto3. He could be the next GP rider to make WorldSSP his personal fiefdom, as he is maybe a little unhappy to no longer be deemed worthy of a Moto2 run.

Manzi won and podiumed on a Triumph last year, as a class rookie, so could he turn water into wins on a Yamaha? Why not, as it is arguably still the best bike to be on, and in the team to be with.

Team GMT94 Yamaha
Rider Valentin Debise

At 31 years of age, Debise gets a deserved full WorldSSP chance just a little later in life than some. He's fast, but will his setup and pace be enough? He's been looking forward to this year and his experience runs to real action on 17 recognised championships, from MotoAmerica to Moto2.

Team Evan Bros. WorldSSP Yamaha
Rider Andrea Mantovani

A truly top Yamaha for Mantovani, who has really only ridden Supersport bikes in the Italian championship, so this is an intriguing match-up. Keep an eye here, as anything could happen.

Team Aruba Racing Ducati
Rider Nicolo Bulega

A slightly disappointing season for Ducati in its comeback year of 2022 has left Bulega champing at the bit to see if a winter break makes a difference. Didn't quite win a race for Ducati last year, and was fourth overall. He will want - and Ducati will need - more this year.

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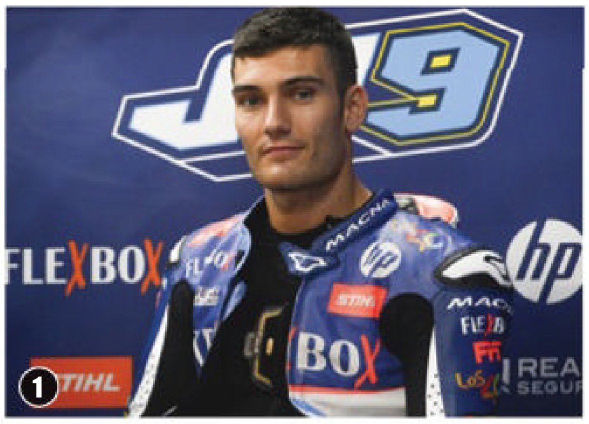

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HE WILL HAVE TO LEARN HOW TO WORK WITH A NEW TEAM... BUT HE JUST MIGHT IMPRESS AT PHILLIP ISLAND

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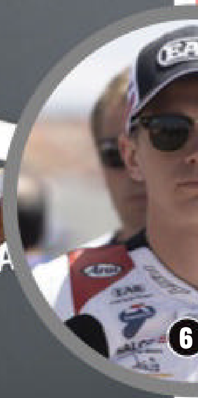

ODDS AND OTHER BODS

The WorldSSP Challenge is held for riders only racing in the European rounds. Although not racing at Phillip Island, unless somebody shakes a wildcard stick at them, here are the others who you will see race on TV for most of the year.

D34G Ducati's second rider, Austria's Maximilian Kofler looks like he could be a top contender for this championship-within-championship. So the German-speakers say.

Federico Fuligni will ride a second Orelac Verdnatura Ducati for the Spanish based team. And Maiki Abe's father was *Abe*, Norick Abe, so the racing gene pool may well be deep and wide and tall. We are excited already. And he's on a Yamaha, of course, for VFT Racing.

Aussie Luke Power and Brit Tom Booth-Amos will contest the Challenge for the Motozoo Racing by Puccetti Kawasaki team. Another Aussie, Tom Edwards, is another nearly full season rider, in the YART - Yamaha WorldSSP team he rode for at some rounds in recent seasons.

Yuta Okaya (Prodina Kawasaki) moves up to WorldSSP from the 300s, as does 2022 300 champion Alvaro Diaz (Arco Yart Yamaha WorldSSP).

Team Kawasaki Puccetti Racing
Rider Can Öncü

Another not quite-winner-so-far, Öncü saw former teammate Montella win one wet race last year, so it shows the old Kawasaki has still got some bite when the conditions are right. Öncü should be a challenger if the bike is up to it this season, and if he keeps his cool.

Team Dynavolt Triumph
Riders Harry Truelove & Niki Tuuli

Truelove is a new WorldSSP kid and an Englishman in a British team. Tuuli is almost a veteran but that Triumph Street Triple RS should be even better in 2023 after some upgrades and a full year. It won a race in 2022, and so did Niki (on an MV), so if the chemistry's right...

Team Althea Racing Ducati
Rider Federico Caricasulo

Caricasulo is an on-off kind of rider, sometimes too often literally. But he was nearly world champion once, and if he and his Ducati get it right in 2023... he has won six races in the past, can he win more? He nearly did in 2022, on the same bike.

Team Petronas MIE - MS Racing Team Honda
Riders Tarran Mackenzie & Adam Norrodin

Yes, Honda is back in it. One Mackenzie, son of Niall and 2021 BSB Champion, joins Midori Moriwaki's CBR600RR-equipped offshoot of her privateer Honda effort, alongside Norrodin. What's the form-book for this rookie combo? A roulette wheel?

1. Navarro's joined WorldSSP from Moto2, and straight into the premier team to boot

2. If Öncü keeps his cool, he'll be a title threat

3. Debise is already a veteran, but he gets his chance on the world stage full-time

4. Bulega is one of the WorldSSP heavyweights on the Ducati

5. Mantovani is on a strong Yamaha and could spring a surprise or two

6. Van Straalen will be a regular podium contender if he can find some consistency

7. Tarran Mackenzie has traded his '22 BSB Yamaha for a WorldSSP Honda in 2023

8. Caricasulo is as enigmatic as they come

Team EAB Racing Yamaha
Rider Glenn van Straalen

Dutchies at the ready again, Glenn van Straalen is fast on his day but has been unlucky while in the podium places too many times. Is only a bit of consistency away from real results, but he had two top-three finishes last season.

Team D34G Ducati
Riders Oliver Bayliss & Maximilian Kofler

Former WorldSBK factory rider Davide Giugliano is Oli Bayliss' team boss this year. And anything could happen with the talented young Aussie this season - in either direction for his career. He didn't seem happy in the Barni Spark set-up last year, so just maybe a change of scenery will unveil a change of results? He will have to learn how to work with a new team all over again, but if it gels quickly he just might impress at Phillip Island.

Team Ducati Orelac Racing VerdNatura
Rider Raffaele De Rosa

Now an old stager, De Rosa is one of those riders who blows hot and cold. But never write him off even if sometimes his run of results get a bit, well, invisible sometimes.

Team MTM Kawasaki
Rider Adrian Huertas

A recent WorldSSP300 champion, Adrian Huertas was a good fit for WorldSSP at times last year. He needs to kick on this year, and has the talent to do it.

Team VFT Racing Yamaha
Rider Nicolas Spinelli

Nicolas Spinelli is a newish name, we'll take Italy's word for it he's a good 'un after only two WorldSSP races last season.

Team Barni Spark Racing Ducati
Rider Yari Montella

Montella is a fully fledged race winner from last year's rookie season, but now he has changed to the bigger but more restricted Ducati that Oli Bayliss rode last year. Very interesting this one.

Team MV Agusta Reparto Corse
Riders Marcel Schrötter & Bahattin Sofuoglu

Seventh place in one race at Phillip Island last year was a good showing for the German, Schrötter. He's paired up with the exciting Turkish talent of Bahattin Sofuoglu, who showed some real pace at times last season. Yet another intriguing duo.

Team Vince64 by Puccetti Racing Kawasaki
Rider John McPhee

Proven and recent Moto3 race winner McPhee arrives after all, in a team aligned with the top Kawasaki squad, Puccetti Racing. A big step for the Scot after so many years of smaller GP bikes, but GP winners are no mugs, in any class.

Team Yamaha Thailand Racing Team
Riders Apiwath Wongthananon & Anupab Sarmoon

A very welcome all-Thai entry sees Wongthananon and Sarmoon take on the world, hopefully grabbing the attention of at least a quarter of the planet.

1. Bayliss has switched Ducati teams in 2023, but more importantly has passed the 'track learning' apprenticeship

2. McPhee is a multiple Moto3 race winner

3. Montella wins at wet Race 1 at Phillip Island last year

> **MCPHEE ARRIVES AFTER ALL, IN A TEAM ALIGNED WITH THE TOP PUCCETTI KAWASAKI SQUAD**

THE CALENDAR

Round	Date	Country	Circuit
1	24-26 Feb	Australia	Phillip Island
2	3-5 Mar	Indonesia	Mandalika
3	21-23 Apr	The Netherlands	Assen
4	5-7 May	Spain	Catalunya
5	2-4 Jun	Italy	Misano
6	30 Jun-2 Jul	Britain	Donington Park
7	28-30 Jul	Czech Republic	Most
8	8-10 Sep	France	Magny Cours
9	22-24 Sep	Spain	Motorland Aragon
10	29 Sep-1 Oct	Portugal	Portimao
11	13-15 Oct	Argentina	San Juan Villicum
12	TBA		

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AT-2 Stainless Full System Exhaust

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WHOLE SHOT

Remy Gardner already looks quite at home on the Yamaha YZF-R1 he'll ride in the 2023 WorldSBK season. With a little more acclimatising to the Pirelli tyres watch out Alvaro, Jonathan and Toprak!

Autódromo Internacional do Algarve

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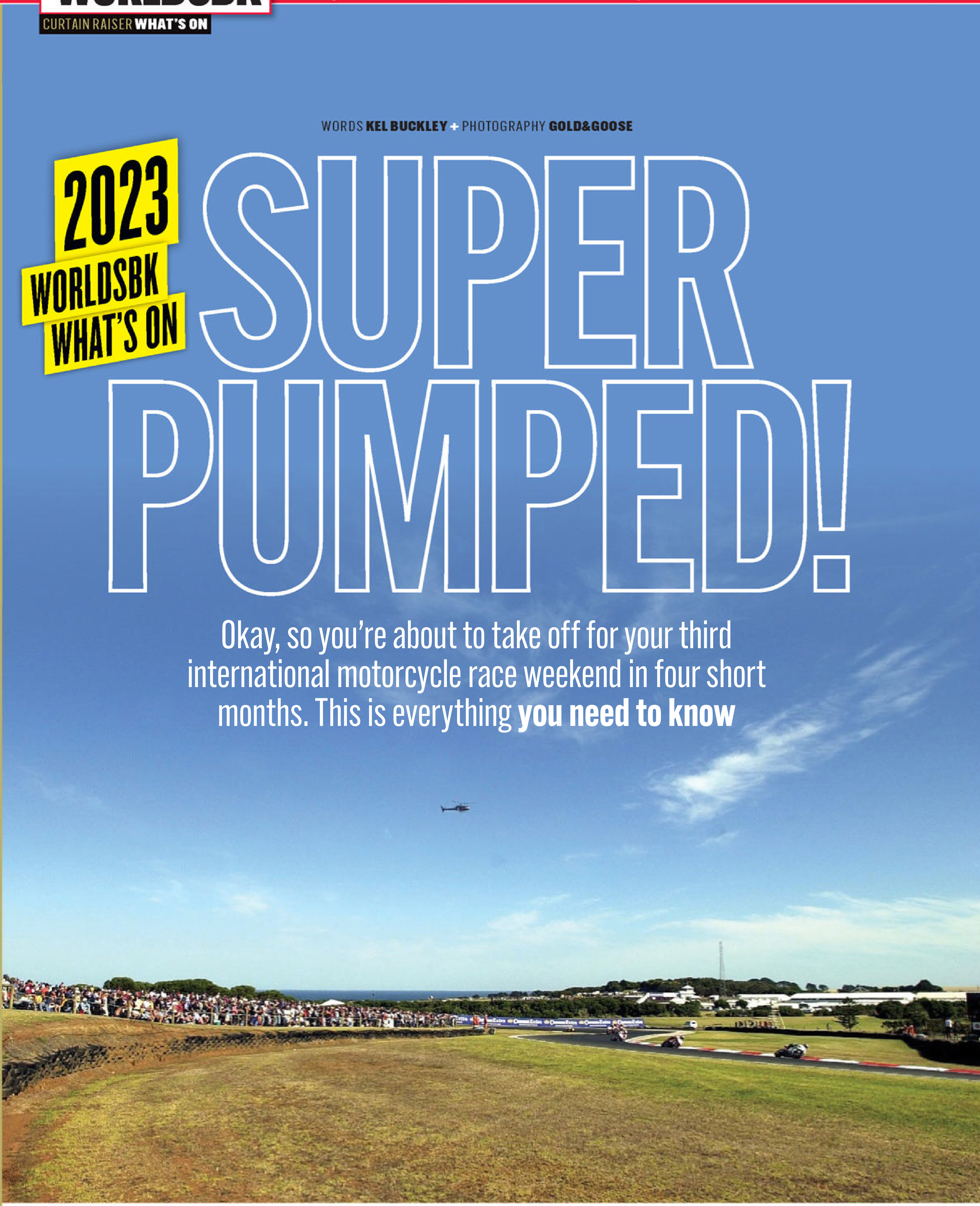
WORDS **KEL BUCKLEY** + PHOTOGRAPHY **GOLD&GOOSE**

2023
WORLDSBK
WHAT'S ON

SUPER PUMPED!

Okay, so you're about to take off for your third international motorcycle race weekend in four short months. This is everything **you need to know**



BAR SBK
LUKEY HEIGHTS

Rookie Remy Gardner, no-longer-a-rookie Oli Bayliss, with Aussies Luke Power and Tom Edwards also thrown in for good measure, there's plenty to look forward to in the 2023 Superbike World Championship (WorldSBK) – and there's no better circuit to kick the whole shebang off at than the fast, flowing and picturesque Phillip Island.

The curtain raiser will be remembered for many reasons, not least as it will mark the first time 2021 Moto2 World Champion Gardner will launch off the line in his very first WorldSBK round.

It'll also be the 32nd time the grand prix circuit has played host to the WorldSBK title; a record, despite the Covid layoff. That puts Phillip Island ahead of the TT Circuit Assen, which has hosted the series 30 times, and the UK's Donington Park and Italy's Misano at 29 times apiece.

And from what we can tell, it'll be the first time in history that Phillip Island has hosted two rounds of WorldSBK and one round of the MotoGP World Championship all within a short four-month period.

Bayliss
Bayl!ssstic
WORLD SUPERBIKE CHAMPION
2001 2006 2008
21

GET YER TICKETS

There's a range of ticketing options for would-be WorldSBK attendees with the most affordable being a pre-purchased Friday general admission ticket which is $40 (or $25 if you're a concession card holder).

There are no grandstand tickets available this year, but there are all sorts of various multiday packages available through Ticketek, with the most expensive one we can ascertain being a Bar SBK and camping package on a powered site. With an event program purchased at the gate and a last-minute decision to throw in a pit walk for you and your 13-year-old, you're looking at something closer to $700.

Kids under 15 get free entry into the pits and paddock, the latter as long as they're accompanied by a paying adult. And if you're one of those people who like to collect event programs, you can save yourself a couple of bucks by ticking the box when you're buying your event tickets through Ticketek. An official program will cost you $15 at the event, or $13 when pre-purchased.

PARKING

Yes, there's parking. For two wheels and four. And it's free! Unlike the debacle of MotoGP, there'll be no need to try and find a shuttle bus from surrounding towns and villages. The weather's been slightly less wet to kick off the year and the circuit is opening up its adjacent paddocks for parking - well, when AMCN went to print it still was anyway. There's probably nothing more unpredictable than Phillip Island's weather patterns, so make sure you double-check in the lead-up to the event just to make triply sure.

THE EXPO

Open between 9am and 5pm daily, the expo is the place to check out some of the manufacturers' latest machinery, importers' latest parts and accessories and to bump into that old mate you haven't seen since before Covid. It can get very busy, so choose your times wisely, and be kind to the people staffing the stalls, especially towards Sunday afternoon; smiling constantly for three days and answering silly questions from sleep-deprived campers really does begin to take its toll.

BLACK DOG RIDE

The Black Dog Ride is again the official charity of the Aussie round of the 2023 FIM Superbike World Championship!

AUSTRALIA'S FINEST

This year's curtain raiser also plays host the opening round of the Australian Superbike Championship. And with McMartin Racing Ducati's new recruit Josh Waters throwing down the fastest time in the recent test at PI, all eyes will be on the 36-year-old as he tries to become the first-ever rider to loft four Aussie Superbike championship trophies.

PIT WALK

If you fancy a stroll down pitlane to get a selfie with Remy Gardner and a dozen people you'll never see again, you can. Available on Saturday or Sunday only, a pre-purchased pitlane walk pass will cost you $35, but if you decide to do it while you're there head to the little information office at the bottom of the overpass stairs that take you over to the infield, and you can buy a $45 pass there. And even though your under-15-year-old got through the gates for free, if they want to join you on the pit walk you'll need to cough up for them too.

NO DOGS, NO BOOZE AND NO CASH

Leave your dog at home, buy your booze once you're inside the gates and if you've been saving up your five-dollar notes for beer money at this year's round of the Supers, it'll be no good to you - the circuit no longer accepts cash transactions. There are only three banks in Cowes, too, so if you don't bank with NAB, Commonwealth or Bendigo you'd better deposit those fivers before you arrive.

ON YER BIKE!

One of the universally loved joys of the Australian round of the world Supers is the ability to ride your bike around the outfield and service roads surrounding the 4.45km circuit.

Only registered bikes are allowed, so forget about throwing your KX65 on the back of the ute and, unlike the Aussie round of the MotoGP, pushbikes are allowed. Whatever you're riding, helmets must be worn at all times, with the circuit citing that normal road rules apply within the track's grounds. But confusingly, electric scooters are also allowed, even though privately owned e-scooters are currently illegal in Victoria.

If you'd prefer to walk around, opt for some comfortable walking boots and lighter jacket, cos there's no locker facilitates to store your jacket, boots and helmet.

FREE LOCAL FRIDAY

Bass Coast Shire residents who can prove their residency can enjoy the on-track action on Friday for nicks. It's called free local Friday (as opposed to local-free Friday, which is probably more realistic as locals prefer to flee the area as it becomes bombarded with droves of grinning leather-clad humans on motorcycles).

PROSECCO DOC
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BEST KEPT SECRET

Despite being hidden up the far corner of the circuit and its fuddy-duddy-sounding name, the Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit Visitor Centre is well worth the walk (or ride).

As well as a fully licensed cafe, the History of Motorsport Display and a hugely impressive collection of 25 Aprilia and Cagiva grand prix racebikes, there's merchandise, slot cars and even a 750m Phillip Island replica go-kart track.

It's a little-known fact, but the cafe is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner from Thursday through to Sunday with breakfast starting from 7am, dinner available from 6pm, and the centre doesn't close until 9pm.

If you want to race your mates on the go-kart track, there's no need to book in advance. Just rock up, pass a breath test - 0.00%! - pay your money and, assuming you're wearing closed-toe footwear and you're wearing something over that cheap Bintang singlet you picked up on your way to Mandalika, then you're good to go. No bare shoulders allowed.

CAGIVA
FIAT

TRACK SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

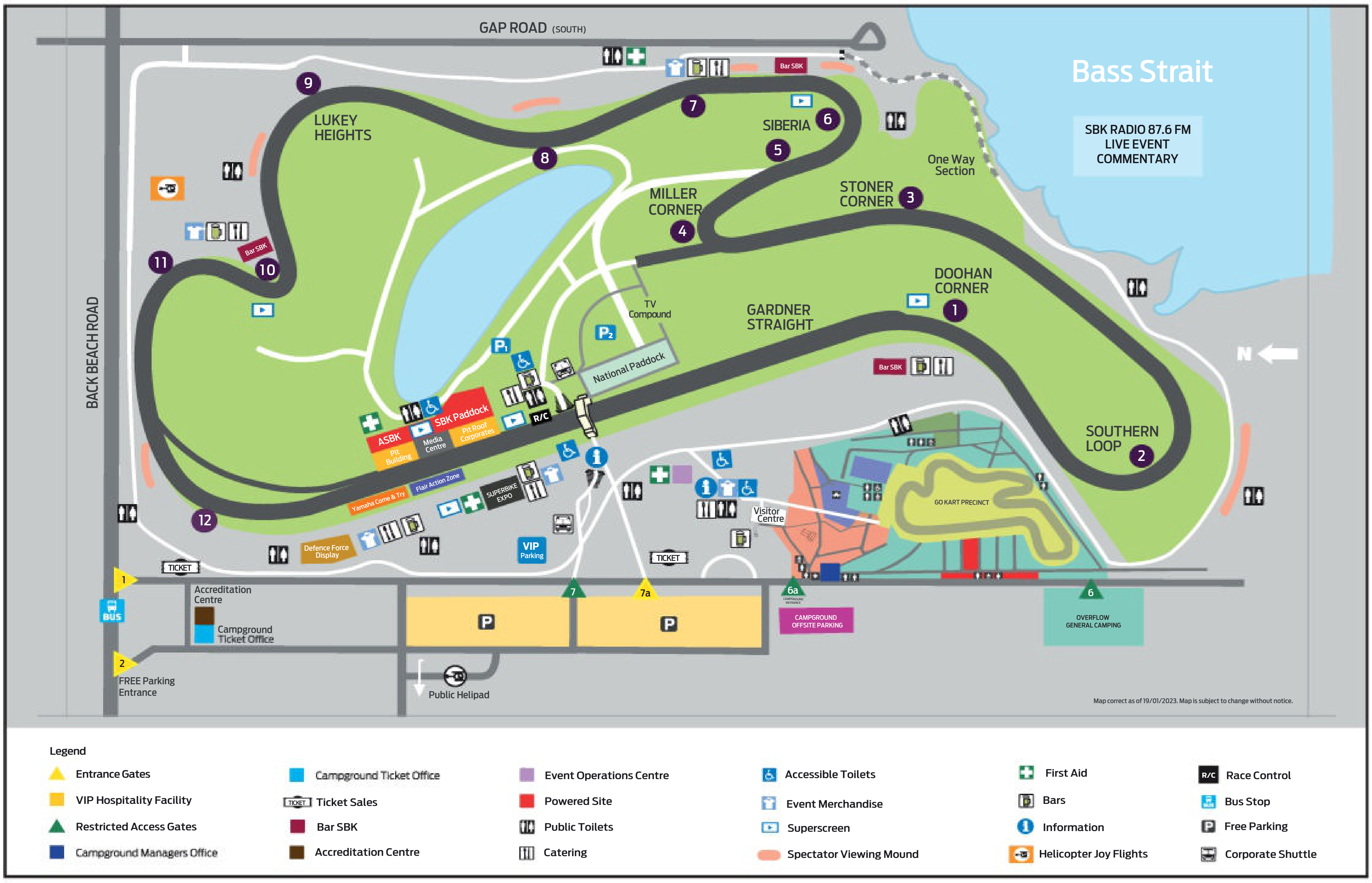
8am	Gates open	
8.50am	Australian Supersport 300	FP
9.15am	Australian Supersport	FP
9.45am	Australian Superbike	FP1
10.30am	WorldSSP	FP1
11.30am	WorldSBK	FP1
12.25pm	ASBK pillion rides	
1.05pm	Australian Supersport 300	Qualifying
1.35pm	Australian Supersport	Qualifying
2.05pm	Australian Superbike	FP2
3pm	WorldSSP	FP2
4pm	WorldSBK	FP2
5.05pm	Australian Supersport 300	Race 1

SATURDAY

8am	Gates open	
8.50am	Australian Superbike	Qualifying
9.40am	Australian Supersport 300	Race 2
10.15am	Australian Supersport	Race 1
10.50am	WorldSBK	FP3
11.40am	Australian Superbike	Race 1
12.25pm	WorldSSP	Superpole
1.10pm	WorldSBK	Superpole
1.40pm	Pit Walk & Safety Car laps	
2.30pm	WorldSSP	Race 1
3.05pm	ASBK pillion rides	
4pm	WorldSBK Race	
5.20pm	Australian Supersport	Race 2

SUNDAY

8am	Gates open	
9.10am	Australian Supersport 300	Race 3
9.45am	Australian Superbike	Race 2
10.30am	WorldSBK	Warm up
10.55am	WorldSSP	Warm up
11.30am	Australian Supersport	Race 3
12pm	Pit Walk & Safety Car laps	
1pm	WorldSBK	Sprint Race
1.40pm	Australian Superbike	Race 3
2.30pm	WorldSSP	Race 2
3.05pm	ASBK pillion rides	
4pm	WorldSBK	Race 2


GAP ROAD (SOUTH)
Bass Strait
SBK RADIO 87.6 FM
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MILLER CORNER
STONER CORNER
One Way Section
DOOHAN CORNER
GARDNER STRAIGHT
SOUTHERN LOOP
TV Compound
National Paddock
SBK Paddock
ASBK
Pit Building
Media Centre
Pit Roof Corporates
Yamaha Come & Try
Flair Action Zone
SUPERBIKE EXPO
Defence Force Display
VIP Parking
Visitor Centre
GO KART PRECINCT
BACK BEACH ROAD
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Accreditation Centre
Campground Ticket Office
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Public Helipad
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Map correct as of 19/01/2023. Map is subject to change without notice.
Legend
Entrance Gates
VIP Hospitality Facility
Restricted Access Gates
Campground Managers Office
Campground Ticket Office
Ticket Sales
Bar SBK
Accreditation Centre
Event Operations Centre
Powered Site
Public Toilets
Catering
Accessible Toilets
Event Merchandise
Superscreen
Spectator Viewing Mound
First Aid
Bars
Information
Helicopter Joy Flights
Race Control
Bus Stop
Free Parking
Corporate Shuttle

PADDOCK SHOW SCHEDULE

There's free paddock access for three-day ticket holders, Bar SBK ticket holders, as well as camping packages and VIP hospitality ticket holders. If you've lobbed for raceday only and want to rub shoulders with the riders and team personnel, wander over to the event information office and you can purchase paddock access for an additional $60. There's a full schedule, but these are the highlights.

FRIDAY

12.20pm	WorldSSP 'New faces' chat show
1.10pm	WorldSBK 'New faces' chat show
1.55pm	Team manger chat show
5.40pm	All classes 'Top 3' chat show

SATURDAY

3.15pm	WorldSSP podium show
4.45pm	WorldSBK podium show
5.55pm	Aussie SSP300 meet 'n' greet
6.05pm	ASBK meet 'n' greet
6.15pm	WorldSSP super show
6.30pm	WorldSBK super show

SUNDAY

11.15am	WorldSBK quiz game
3.15pm	WorldSSP podium show
4.45pm	WorldSBK podium show
5.30pm	SBK Awards show

WORDS **GORDON RITCHIE & KEL BUCKLEY** + PHOTOGRAPHY **GOLD&GOOSE**

"TRY AND FIGHT FOR A PODIUM HERE OR THERE"

After a decade riding prototype machinery, Remy Gardner's quick adaptation to his Yamaha YZF-R1 superbike bodes well for Aussie fans

WorldSBK rookie Remy Gardner completed two two-day tests in Europe before heading to Phillip Island for the 2023 championship curtain-raiser next weekend. Inside the top-10 on his very first outing aboard the GYTR GRT Yamaha YZF-R1 on the opening day at Jerez, it was a more impressive showing than it may seem given the young Aussie's recent experience riding only prototype machinery and on very different tyres.

"It was good fun, very different from what I'm used to," he said after his first outing on the 1000cc inline four-cylinder

87 Remy
IXON
TCX
GYTR
YAMAHA
87

1

"I HAVE SOME BAD HABITS THAT I AM STILL TRYING TO KICK," HE HALF-JOKED

Yamaha. "I think the tyres at the moment are the biggest thing and understanding how much confidence and support the front tyre gives. I did lots of laps [on the first day], like 80-something laps, which is crazy, but I think it was good just to understand what I need to adapt and change."

And that understanding and adaptation continued into the second day, as well as at the two-day test at Portugal's Portimao circuit – the scene of his first Moto2 victory – because by the time the chequered flag flew to signal the end of the official Portimao test, the Aussie had climbed up to eighth place and was the top independent rider as well as the best-placed rookie. And once again, far more impressive than it may seem as the quickest four riders were all under the lap record.

"For sure understanding the bike a bit from Jerez helped us start off on the front foot at Portimao," he said. "We improved the bike a lot, also myself, I'm still trying to adapt and learn how to ride the bike fast. We just need to understand the tyres a bit more."

The last comment was presumably aimed towards the softer SCX tyre, as Gardner's quickest times came with the SCO race tyre. And while he said he was "happy with the gap" to the leaders, there's still plenty of speed to unlock once he gets his head around the softer-compound rubber.

After a season in MotoGP's premier class and a decade before that racing Moto2 and Moto3 machinery, as well as learning his new bike, the 2021 Moto2 world champ is also working hard to unlearn some stuff.

"I have some bad habits that I am still trying to kick," he half-joked. "I just need to ride easier and more fluidly. Last year [on the KTM RC16] I had to ride like an animal every single lap, every single corner, to go half fast."

Gardner reckons that the difference between the MotoGP Michelin front and the less-stiff Pirelli is like chalk and cheese.

"Everywhere. Everywhere really," he nods. "Braking is kind of similar, but kind of that turn-in, trail braking, and getting off the brakes as well, you can push on it so hard. You can feel where it's at, which is very nice. There are different lines as well, as it is a different bike. I am trying to find a direction."

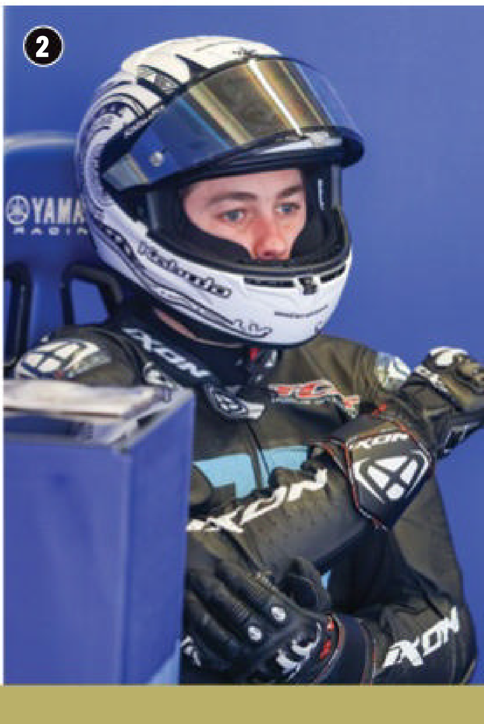
After an early issue with a front vibration that was fixed by changing to a new front tyre in Jerez, Gardner continued the process of learning how to go fast on a production racebike and, on day two, after a total of 162 laps, the Australian had already joined the top-10 club.

1. A new frontier for 2023, but one that Gardner is relishing

2. Preparing for his first outing on the Yamaha at Jerez

3. Up and at 'em: Gardner hard on the brakes

4. At long last: a fast Aussie back in WorldSBK!



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While Gardner's speed and talent have never been questioned, the 24-year-old has never been known to adapt to a bike, track or new team particularly fast – a look at his Moto2 and MotoGP results will confirm this. So his top-10 finish in Jerez, backed up by a top-eight in Portimao, bodes very well for Aussie fans who finally have a countryman to cheer on in the Superbike category.

Coming from a MotoGP machine to a modified streetbike may be a lot easier than going the other way around, but this feels like a strong debut against the vast majority of his peers.

Having moved from the MotoGP category riding for the French-based Tech3 KTM outfit, Gardner was asked about his first impressions of his new team's working philosophy.

WORLDSSP

POWER TO HIM

After a fifth-placed finish in MotoAmerica's Supersport championship last year, Aussie Luke Power is ready for his WorldSSP debut

ALTHOUGH Aussie fans won't get to cheer Luke Power on from the fence surrounding the Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit, the determined 17-year-old will get his first taste of the MotoZoo Racing by Pucetti Kawasaki ZX-6R at the the third round in Assen, which officially marks the start of the WorldSSP European Challenge Championship.

Contesting just the European rounds, which is the eight rounds between Assen's Round 3 and Portimao's Round 10, the WorldSSP European Challenge rules remain unchanged; it's just a shorter season with less travel and significantly less expense.

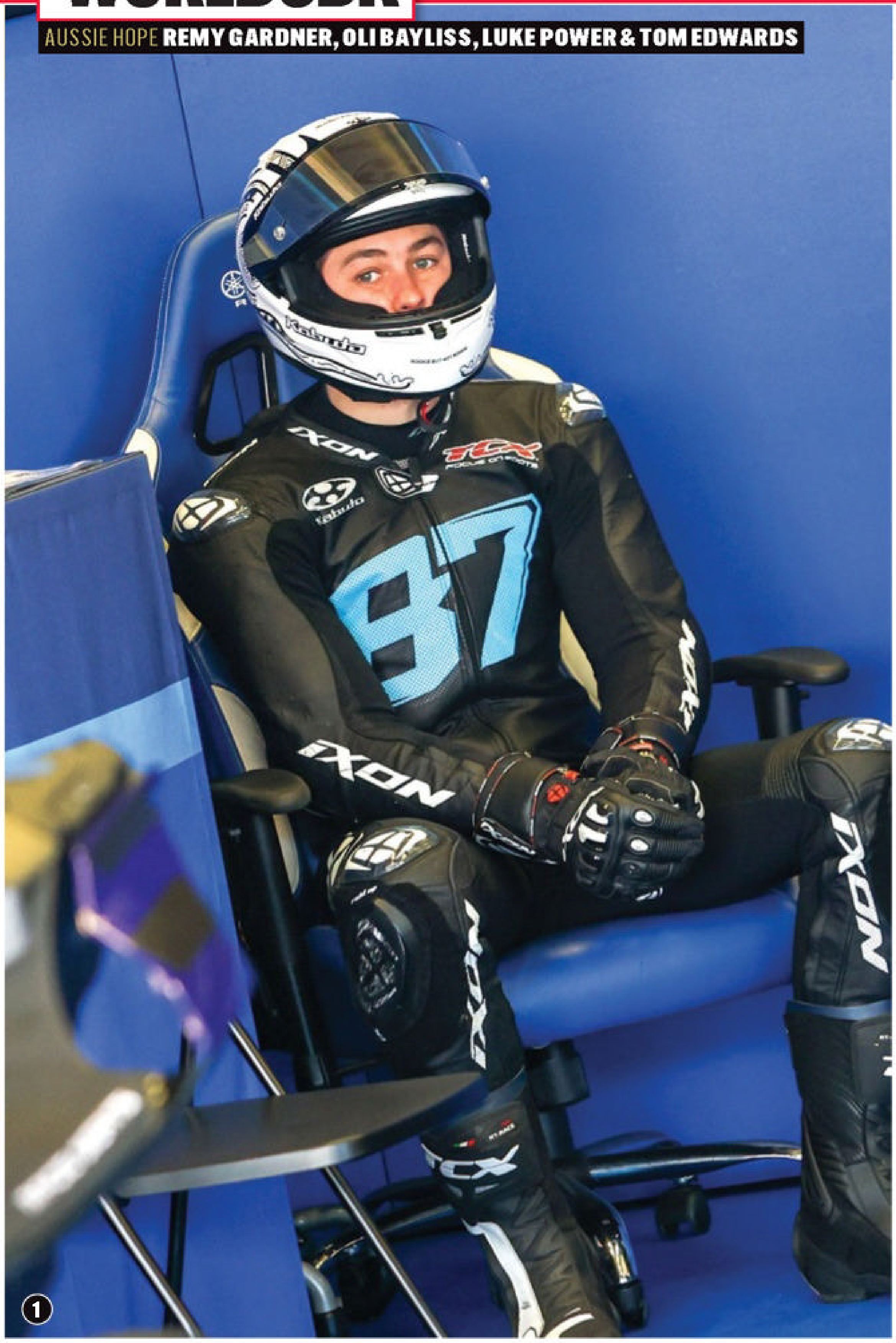
Although the deal was signed towards the end of November, where it was confirmed there'd be direct support from Kawasaki Motors Europe, Power wasn't at the official Jerez or Portimao tests but is planning on heading overseas to start work next month, "I am absolutely stoked to be racing in the world championship and it has been a dream of mine for a long time. Really," he beams. "It felt like the chance came around pretty quick. I got along well with Fabio from Moto2 and Manuel from Puccetti Racing, and I was really excited straight away. And not long after I found out there was an option, we had the deal signed.

"It is a bit surreal. I have just dropped my little brother off at school, feeling just like a normal person, and I don't think of myself as a world championship racer. It is quite surreal but I am super-excited to get it all underway. I will go to Europe in early to middle of March, and go testing before my first WorldSSP Challenge round at Assen.

"We will test at Aragon, Barcelona and Misano, before the first round. It is a bit of a bummer not be racing at Phillip Island; I definitely wanted to race there and I had a bit of support from the locals, especially as that is my home circuit. But it is what it is and we will go to the European rounds head down and try to get the kind of results that the team and I know we are capable of.

"What I am putting pressure on myself to do is to learn and improve. I would like to start with a really good result but I understand that motorcycle racing is a cruel game, so I am not going to put pressure on myself. We will finish the first round wherever we finish. From there on it will be 'righto, these are the steps we need to take to improve. So let's take those steps, let's improve, work with the team, get the bike working and take those steps'.

"It is a big learning curve, so it is all about making progress. And hopefully being able to battle for the European Challenge Championship - that is definitely my goal, but let's see. It is a big jump into the deep end of the pool and we will just see if we can start swimming straight away, or if we need to get a bit of practice first."



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WORLDSSP

OLIVER'S TWIST

With a year's worth of experience under his belt and a switch to a new team for the 2023 WorldSSP season, Oli Bayliss is confident for a strong showing at his home circuit

OLI BAYLISS will contest the 2023 WorldSSP Championship under the watchful eye of former WorldSBK rider Davide Giugliano, who signed the 19-year-old to ride for his D34G Racing squad. Austrian rider Maximilian Kofler will contest the European rounds as Oli's teammate.

While adapting to a new team will have its challenges, the squad runs Ducati V2 machinery which the Aussie cut his WorldSSP teeth on during last year's 12-round, 24-race season. And while the team itself is also in only its second year of WorldSSP inclusion, having contested the European rounds of the 2022 season with as many as four riders at various rounds, Bayliss believes the match-up has the potential to fight for top-six finishes throughout the season.

Speaking after his first test at Portimao earlier this month, where he finished ninth quickest from 11 Supersport riders, Bayliss was pretty happy with his results, as well as his feelings both on the bike and within his new team.

"This was my first test with the D34G team. Honestly, I was pretty happy with the first day at Portimao. It ended better than my last test here," he said. "I am really happy with the work we did on the first day. I matched the best time I had done around here.

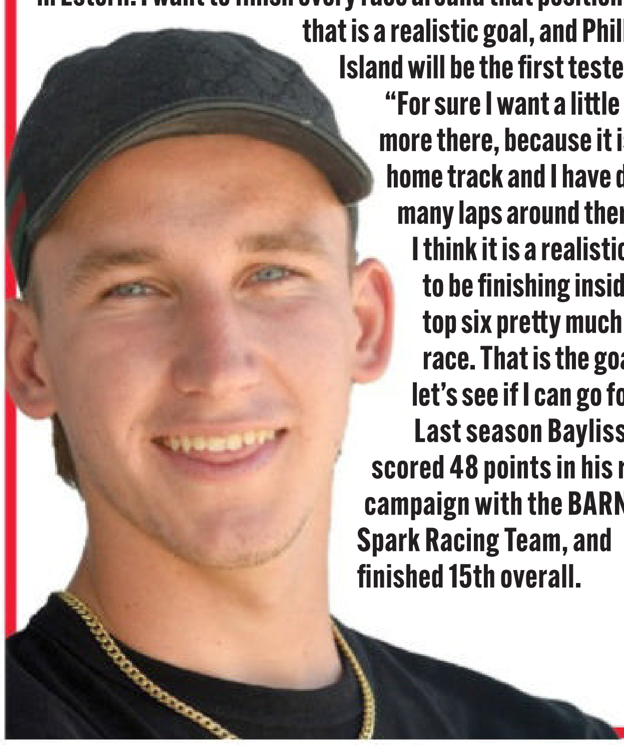
"For sure it is going to be difficult moving in with a new team on the first day, but I am happy with the results. We know what we have to work on and I have a good feeling with the bike and the team. For sure we will go a bit quicker."

When asked about the pressures of opening the season in front of his home crowd at Phillip Island, the laid-back teenager shrugged it off.

"There is never any pressure and I look forward to going back to race at my home round - it's good fun and a good atmosphere," he said. "Hopefully, if we are going to have our best result we will have it there. I am confident for Phillip Island and it is good that we get two days of testing there. I am excited to keep working with the team. I kind of want to be finishing every race where I had my best finish last year, which was sixth in Estoril. I want to finish every race around that position. I think that is a realistic goal, and Phillip Island will be the first tester.

"For sure I want a little bit more there, because it is my home track and I have done so many laps around there. But, I think it is a realistic goal to be finishing inside the top six pretty much every race. That is the goal, so let's see if I can go for it."

Last season Bayliss scored 48 points in his rookie campaign with the BARNI Spark Racing Team, and finished 15th overall.



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1. Gardner taking a break in the pit box at Jerez where he did around 80 laps on Day 1

2. Methodical approach: Gardner pumped out the laps during the four days of European testing

3. His biggest issue at the moment is acclimatising to the Pirelli front tyre, which has a vastly different feel to Michelin MotoGP's hoop

4. The GYTR GRT team has strong support from Yamaha

"I MEAN, I AM GOING TO SAY BETTER THAN LAST YEAR, MUCH BETTER THAN LAST YEAR"

"They are really very professional," he stated, though it's unclear whether this was a jibe at KTM's comment that he was 'not professional enough' which led to him losing his MotoGP ride. "I mean, I am going to say better than last year, much better than last year. From what I see at the moment. I feel like everybody is quite calm, which is good. The atmosphere is calm in the team, which is always a nice working environment. And also the support from Yamaha is felt as well. Which is also very nice. Honestly, I can't complain."

Looking at his chances for WorldSBK success in 2023, Gardner was asked about what he hoped to achieve in his rookie season.

"I mean this season, obviously I may not be fighting for a championship at the moment but hopefully we can gain experience and step by step move towards the front of the pack," he said, before quickly adding, "and obviously try to fight for a podium here or there. I think that would be the ultimate goals for this year."

Gardner has also seen another difference between WorldSBK and MotoGP in that the rider is maybe more important to the result than the machine. Or at least a rider has the opportunity to be able to influence things more.

"Yes, from what I have seen, and now I have started to ride a bit. Obviously there are better or worse bikes in all paddocks, basically, but maybe the rider can make up for that a little bit, for the missing material, let's say.

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“MOTOGP NOW IS SO CLOSE THAT IN THE END, THE MATERIAL MAKES A DIFFERENCE.”

“Compared with MotoGP nowadays, it is kinda going [like] Formula 1; I feel you have to have the right bike or don’t turn up on Sunday. I think the level in MotoGP now, everybody is really good riders, they are all really fast riders. The level that [Marc] Marquez put from previous years, all us kids have grown up striving to that level and the top five guys in Moto2 are all extremely fast riders, same in Moto3, and every time they step up they learn something more.

“The level in MotoGP now is so close that in the end, the material makes a difference.”

In any case, Gardner is looking forward to opening his WorldSBK account in front of his home fans on what he says is his most-loved circuit.

“I think it is pretty cool,” he said when asked how it feels to start the season at Phillip Island rather than towards the end, as it traditionally occurs on the MotoGP calendar.

“Home support there, of course, and my favourite track, I have not been there any more than some others, because I have been away from Australia for so long. I think I did an 80cc race there one time before I came to Europe. I have not had too many days there but I still love it; it is the best track.”

WORLDSSP

AND NOT FORGETTING!

A FOURTH Australian rider will fly the Aussie flag in the World Supersport category next year with Tom Edwards contesting the European rounds with the highly regarded YART - Yamaha WorldSSP team. The 20-year-old rode with the squad for three rounds last season where he had a best finish of ninth at Race 2 at Estoril.

AMCN contacted Edwards for comment, but he didn’t get back to us before the issue went to print.

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L VE ISLAND

After two years at Oran Park, WorldSBK made its debut at Phillip Island in 1990 – and it was an instant Aussie-dominated classic

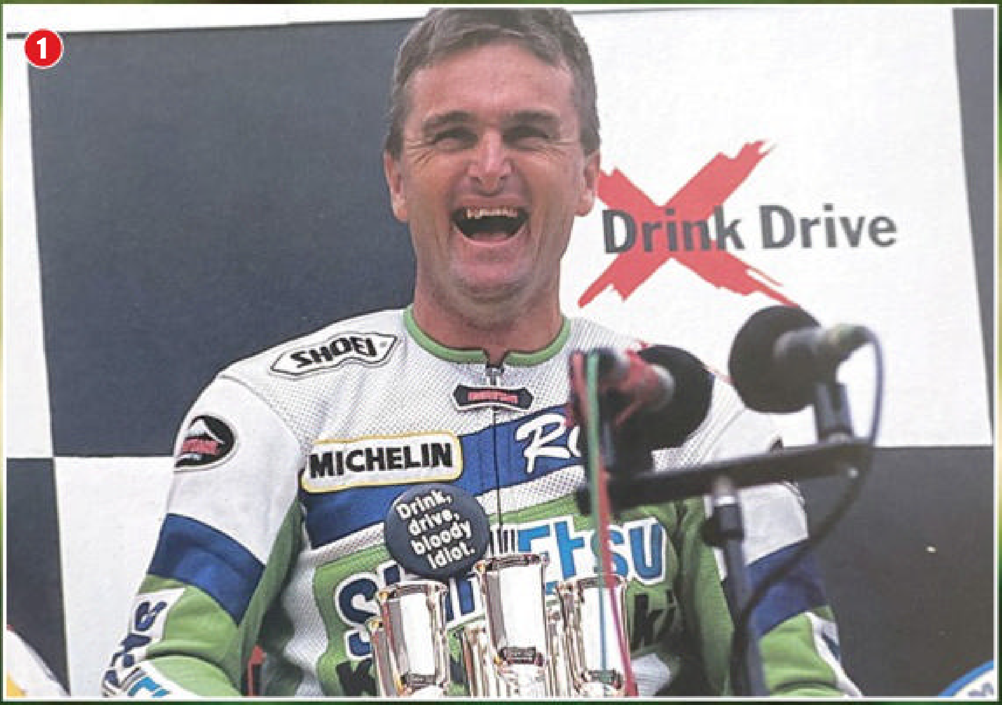
The Superbike World Championship holds a special place in the Australian motorcycle racing lexicon, and the seeds were sown even before the series made its debut at Oran Park in 1988 – when mighty Mick Doohan was at his towering, peerless four-stroke best in one of his last local appearances before switching to 500GP racing.

Even though the Australian Road Racing Championship was still being held in the early 1980s, hosting the traditional two-stroke GP classes, it was already in terminal decline as superbike racing had become the de-facto national title with riders such as Malcolm Campbell, Rob Phillis, Andrew Johnson, Mick Cole, the late Iain Pero, Paul Feeney and Scott Stephens doing some amazing things on the skinny-tyred, big-bore and (sometimes) ill-handling brutes. Superbike racing was not only a media darling, but riders, teams and spectators couldn't get enough either – with tracks such as Winton and Oran Park the major epicentres.

American superbike pioneer Steve McLaughlin was well aware of this local adoration and, as one of the driving forces behind the inauguration of the WorldSBK title, it was a no-brainer that Australia would be one of the countries to get start-up hosting rights.

The Oran Park round in 1988 was the first

INTERVIEW **MARK FATTORE** + PHOTOGRAPHY **AMCN ARCHIVES, KEL EDGE AND A. HERL**


1
Drink Drive
SHOEI
MICHELIN
Drink, drive, bloody idiot.

37
Marlboro
YAMAHA
DUNLOP
11
SHOEI

MAIN. Goddard and Phillis were about this far apart for the whole 22 laps of Race 2

1. From agony to ecstasy for Phillis in a rollercoaster day for the crowd favourite

2. The 1990 WorldSBK season was ultra competitive, with Ducati, Yamaha, Kawasaki and Honda all in the mix

3. Mick Doohan pops in to check the WorldSBK progress of Campbell and a cool as a cucumber chain-wearing Beattie

PI'S FIRST 1990 OZ WORLDSBK ROUND

time a road racing world championship event was held in Australia, and 18,000 spectators lined the circuit to soak it up – and see exotica like the Bimotas of Raymond Roche and Stephane Mertens (see story on page 80) in action.

Mind you, Doohan and Dowson were aboard trick alloy-framed Yamaha FZR750s of their own, with the former utterly dominant. In 1989, the event returned to Oran Park, but this time inclement weather in Sydney turned it into a bit of a lottery. Peter Goddard (Yamaha OW01) and teammate Dowson won the two races, while the consistent Phillis (Kawasaki GPX750) claimed the overall honours.

A year later and the local world championship dynamics had been turned on their head, with Philip Island to host its final MotoGP round before the event transferred to the all-new Eastern Creek circuit in Sydney, while WorldSBK would move south from Oran Park to Phillip Island – complete with sponsorship from the Victorian government under its anti-drink driving banner.

The switch was met with universal applause, and Goddard was one of them: "I was happy that it left Oran Park to go to the best track in the world. Oran was more of a car circuit and had a nice amphitheatre, but it was a concrete jungle."

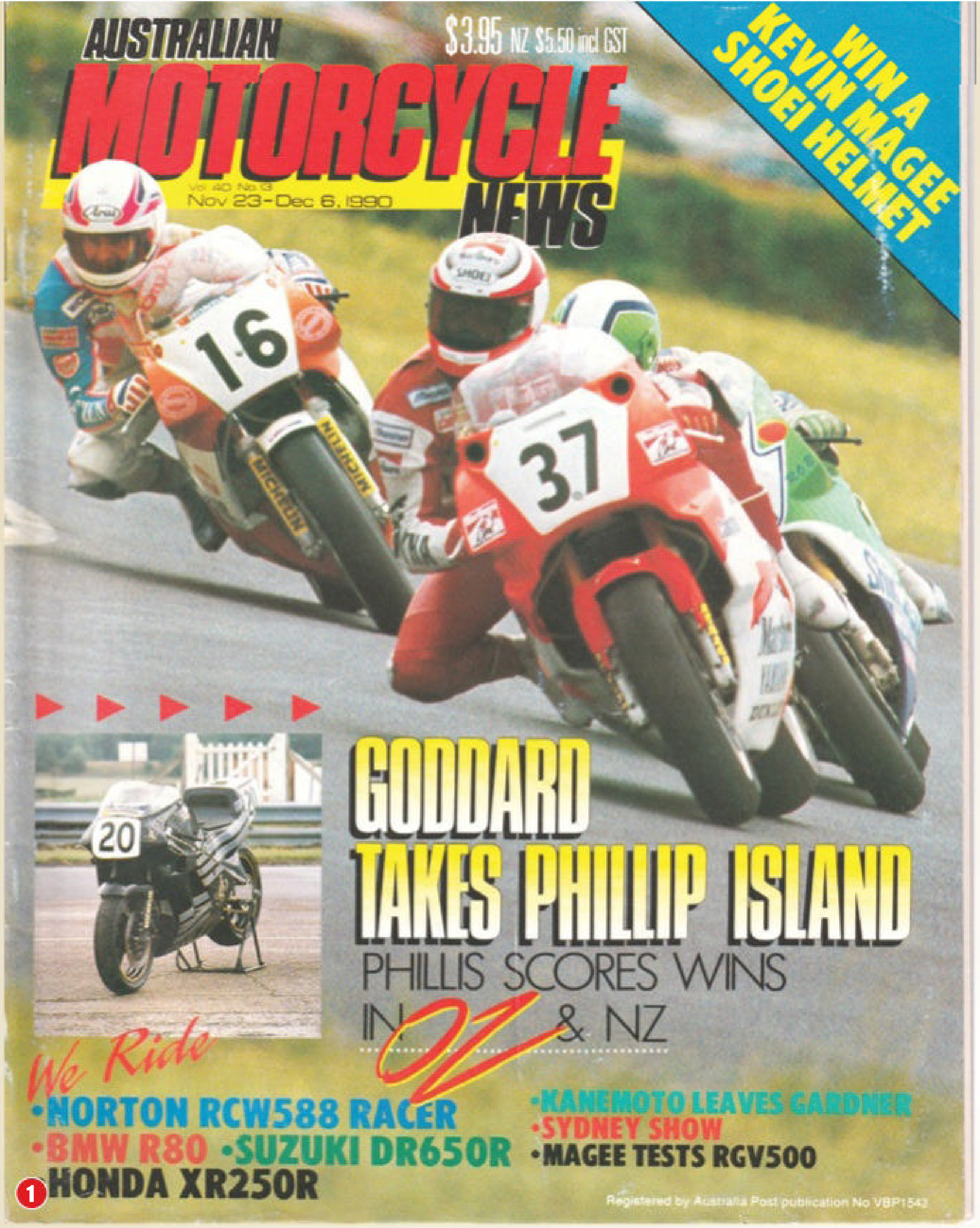
Goddard's sentiments just about summed it up, and so the WorldSBK caravan headed to the Victorian grand prix circuit in mid-November 1990 for the 11th and penultimate round of the Diesel Jeans-sponsored championship, and here's how then-AMCN scribe Bruce Newton summed up it: "Peter Goddard was rewarded for a weekend of hard work, Rob Phillis for a season of hard work, and, of course, Raymond Roche and Ducati deservedly won the championship."

The anticipation was palpable ahead of the event, more so from an Aussie standpoint as most of the internationals were getting their first taste of the 4.445km circuit – so the double whammy of learning a new layout and finding base settings was ahead of them.

There were a whopping 34 entries, with the Honda RC30 the most popular mount (11) ahead of the Yamaha OW01 (FZR750R, 10), Kawasaki ZXR750 (five), Ducati 851 (five) and Suzuki GSX-R750 (three). And here's the really spicy element: 24 of the riders were from Australia and New Zealand, with the likes of Phillis, Goddard, reigning Aussie superbike champion Malcolm Campbell, Aaron Slight, Daryl Beattie, Scott Doohan and Dowson joined by Marty Craggill, Steve Martin, Rene Bongers, Michael O'Connor, Peter Guest and Roy Leslie.

A few of the championship regulars were missing with injury, including Italians Giancarlo Falappa, Baldassare Monti and American Fred Merkel, who had won the first two WorldSBK titles. Monti was tragically killed in a scooter accident in Italy in 2008.

The riders were greeted with Phillip Island's notorious 'microclimate' when they lobbed, which affected practice and qualifying. As well as precipitation, there were wind gusts of up to 90km/h, which is why no one got within cooee of Phillis's then lap record of 1m39.45s.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AUSTRALIAN MOTORCYCLE NEWS

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"PHILLIS, THOUGH, STILL LOOKED AND ACTED LIKE A KETTLE, ABOUT TO BOIL AND START ISSUING STEAM"

"The wind was diabolical," said Goddard. "It was unpredictable; one lap I was nearly in the dirt and on the outside of Turn 1, the next I was nearly off on the inside."

Still, Goddard, with new-construction Japanese-made Dunlops on his OW01 and revised fork springs, as well as Warren Willing back in his corner after returning from 500GP duties with Kenny Roberts' team, was all class as he set pole position with a best lap of 1m40.35s.

Dowson (ZXR750), who in 1990 had defected from Yamaha to Kawasaki, spearheading the company's Japanese racing duties, was second – and much happier after a languid performance in the WorldSBK round a week before at the tight and twisty Shah Alam in Malaysia.

Bongers, who had replaced Dowson at the local Marlboro Yamaha Dealer Team, was a brilliant third in qualifying, ahead of the man who won

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Drink Drive
SUPERPRIX
PHILLIP ISLAND
DIESEL Jeans SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 10/11 NOVEMBER

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1. AMCN had the round all covered, and there were some tasty bike tests as well!

2. After coming close a few times during the season, Phillis' first WorldSBK win at his home track was extra special

3. Roche and Pirovano finished 1-2 in the 1990 championship

4. Mertens crashed in 1990, but it was nothing like this effort in the 1992 round!

5. Phillip Island circuit ex-honcho Fergus Cameron with the first ever WorldSBK poster

6. Roche wrapped up the title at Phillip Island in 1990

7. Pirovano was a racer's racer: fast, tenacious and lightly framed in the Dani Pedrosa mould

8. Housework: Goddard cleans his visor before the heat of battle

both races in Malaysia – the late Italian dynamo Fabrizio Pirovano (OW01). The front row – five on every line in those days, remember – was completed by Belgian Stephane Mertens (RC30), and on row two it was burly Englishman Rob McElnea (OW01), Doohan (RC30), Terry Rymer (OW01), Phillis (ZXR750) and Roche (851).

Phillis, who has pushed Pirovano all the way in both races at Shah Alam, high-sided at Southern Loop in opening practice, and in qualifying an issue with spark plugs – a tiny side electrode would break off – caused the bike to lose power.

Campbell (a crash at Lukey Heights) and Beattie (persistent engine woes) fared even worse in 15th and 17th positions respectively, giving themselves plenty to do on race day – which then consisted of two 22-lap races on the Sunday.

Slight (ZXR750) was 16th, and behind Beattie came a gaggle of emerging local stars: Craggill (GSX-R750), Martin (GSX-R750), Leslie (851) and O'Connor (RC30). All 34 riders qualified.

The rain had passed by Sunday and the wind had eased, with conditions benign enough for Phillis, with his race engine now over its qualifying recalcitrance, to top warm-up with a 1m39.71s. But it wasn't the 'normal' Phillis that morning, as noted by Newton: "Phillis, though, still looked and acted like a kettle, about to boil

FRENCH RESISTANCE

The 1990 WorldSBK title, the third for the production-based series, was a brilliant one for Frenchman Raymond Roche and Ducati. Roche came to WorldSBK with a rich pedigree, including third in the 1984 500GP title behind Eddie Lawson and Randy Mamola. After finishing third in the 1989 WorldSBK series, Roche rode out of his skin at the start of 1990, winning three of the first six races and finishing second in the balance. From there, it was really just a matter of holding his nerve, but five more wins meant that he was in a position to put it beyond doubt at Phillip Island. And that he did, keeping his powder dry with 5-8 results.

Roche finished the championship on 382pt, ahead of Fabrizio Pirovano (325), Stephane Mertens (300), Rob Phillis (238), Rob McElnea (218) and Fred Merkel (197). Nine riders won races during the season - a long way removed from the present!

LOCAL TRIBE

Was it a round of the Australian Superbike Championship or Superbike World Championship? A cursory glance would have created some confusion, such was the local interest in the inaugural WorldSBK round at Phillip Island with a bevy of wildcard entries.

And the reason? Aussie superbike technical regulations in the late 1980s and early 1990s were in sync with the FIM rules, which obviously made racing in the world title a far more attractive proposition - and the prizemoney on offer wasn't too bad either!

"I loved those days, when national teams could compete and be competitive," said Peter Goddard. "Aussie teams built great bikes - as they do now, but the gulf between the technical regs is now just too much."

Steve Martin agrees. "The Aussie bikes weren't far off in those days, and the biggest difference was probably the tyres and what we could access compared to the championship full-timers. And we probably weren't as adept at setup - I certainly wasn't as 1990 was my first full year on a superbike.

"But we still pinched ourselves that we were racing with the internationals - it was just a tremendous buzz."

and start issuing steam. His intensity, for a man normally so jovial and relaxed, was frightening."

In front of just 10,000 spectators – perhaps kept away by the bad weather or those choosing to take the couch route watching SBS's live telecast – the preliminaries soon made way for the real thing, which Newton described as a "fine first race and a classic second".

In Race 1, Pirovano, Dowson and Phillis got the best of the start. Phillis, still full of fire and brimstone, was in the lead by Turn 3 as Goddard began to inch his way forward. Then it all went pear-shaped for Phillis who, with about a one-second lead, locked up the rear of his ZXR750 coming into Turn 4 on lap two and ran off the track. To increase his buffer over Goddard, the plan was to slingshot out of Turn 4 in first gear instead of second – and if he had a slipper clutch that would have been a manageable operation.

But alas not, and when he tried to re-join the sodden outfield caught him out, which kickstarted a beautiful-to-the-eye, 180-degree slow-speed pirouette and down he went – snapping the bike's clip-on in the process. All done. It bordered on comical to watch, but Phillis wasn't as ebullient: "I'm pissed off, I'm a jerk, I'm an empty-head."

Phillis was partly to 'blame' for the new positioning of Turn 4 when Philip Island was resurrected, as on a wild and windy day some years earlier he had sagely suggested to then circuit owner Fergus Cameron – who was one of the driving forces to get the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix to Phillip Island – to shorten the old run to Turn 4 and subsequently the track length from 4.8 to 4.445km. Fergus was receptive, and then Phillis proceeded to cut some celebratory hot laps around the old, crumbling layout in his wife's front-wheel drive Holden Gemini... As you do.

I digress. With Phillis out, Goddard only had to deal with initial pressure from Pirovano in Race 1 before he waltzed to his second ever WorldSBK victory by a massive 11 seconds. Pirovano, whose rear tyre had dropped off quite quickly, then fell into the clutches of Mertens, and their arm wrestle was only decided on the final lap when they touched at Siberia. Mertens fell and was then forced to revert to his spare bike for Race 2. There was plenty of feeling, as both were still battling for second in the championship.

As WorldSBK aficionados would know, that wasn't Mertens' biggest Island bingle: two years later he crashed his Ducati 888 coming onto the front straight. The bike then cannoned into the pit fence, caught fire, and rolled past the finish line in flames before coming to rest. Mertens also broke a collarbone in the process.

"IT WAS JUST BRILLIANT WITH THE AUSSIES BANGING 'BARS AT THE FRONT"

Further back, Beattie, Campbell and Dowson engaged in an all-Aussie scrap. Beattie, already a star on the rise after winning the Suzuka 200km for HRC earlier in the year, flashed across the line in third before being disqualified for his RC30 being 2.4kg underweight.

That promoted Dowson to third, ahead of Campbell, Roche, now on the cusp of winning the world title, Bongers, Doohan, Slight, Rymer and Finn Jari Suhonen (OW01). Twenty-one riders completed the distance.

Race 2 was a humdinger, with highlights from every direction: Phillis's first WorldSBK win after a nail-biting battle with Goddard and the fast-finishing Campbell; Roche's first WorldSBK title; and the lap record broken six times.

"It was just brilliant with the Aussies banging 'bars at the front," recalls Goddard. "From the beginning it was basically me and Robbie and Dowson, but then Dowson had a big wobble – it was like he picked up the front coming out of a turn and then the wheel landed on an angle and threw him all over the place.

"Robbie kept on passing me down the straight, but I was good at Turn 2 and into 4 and kept on getting him back. And then Wally joined us, and I reckon we swapped positions about 30 times. It was just so much fun."

Here's how the Michelin-shod Phillis saw it: "I got another great start and was in front early on. At that point, and with Goddard doing most of the hard work, I just tried to stay comfortable and keep the tyres in good shape in preparation

1. Phillis went into finish third in the 1991 and 1992 WorldSBK titles

2. Phillis alongside one of the original superbike pioneers: the inimitable New Zealander Graeme Crosby

3. Finn Jari Suhonen is Campbell's next victim as he slices through the field in race two

4. Goddard is now the president of Motorcycling Australia

5. Goddard's overall victory in 1990 was all class

1990 PHILLIP ISLAND WORLDSBK

QUALIFYING RESULTS

POS	RIDER	BIKE	TIME
1	Peter Goddard	Yamaha	1m40.35s
2	Michael Dowson	Kawasaki	1m40.70s
3	René Bongers	Yamaha	1m40.89s
4	Fabrizio Pirovano	Yamaha	1m41.13s
5	Stéphane Mertens	Honda	1m41.29s
6	Rob McElnea	Yamaha	1m41.38s
7	Scott Doohan	Honda	1m41.52s
8	Terry Rymer	Yamaha	1m41.79s
9	Rob Phillis	Kawasaki	1m41.86s
10	Raymond Roche	Ducati	1m41.87s

RACE 1 RESULTS

POS	RIDER	BIKE	TIME
1	Peter Goddard	Yamaha	36m50.80s
2	Fabrizio Pirovano	Yamaha	+11.16s
3	Michael Dowson	Kawasaki	+15.39s
4	Malcolm Campbell	Honda	+15.62s
5	Raymond Roche	Ducati	+16.08s
6	René Bongers	Yamaha	+16.62s
7	Scott Doohan	Honda	+24.34s
8	Aaron Slight	Kawasaki	+24.64s
9	Terry Rymer	Yamaha	+27.67s
10	Jari Suhonen	Yamaha	+31.21s

31 starters, 21 finishers and 1 DSQ

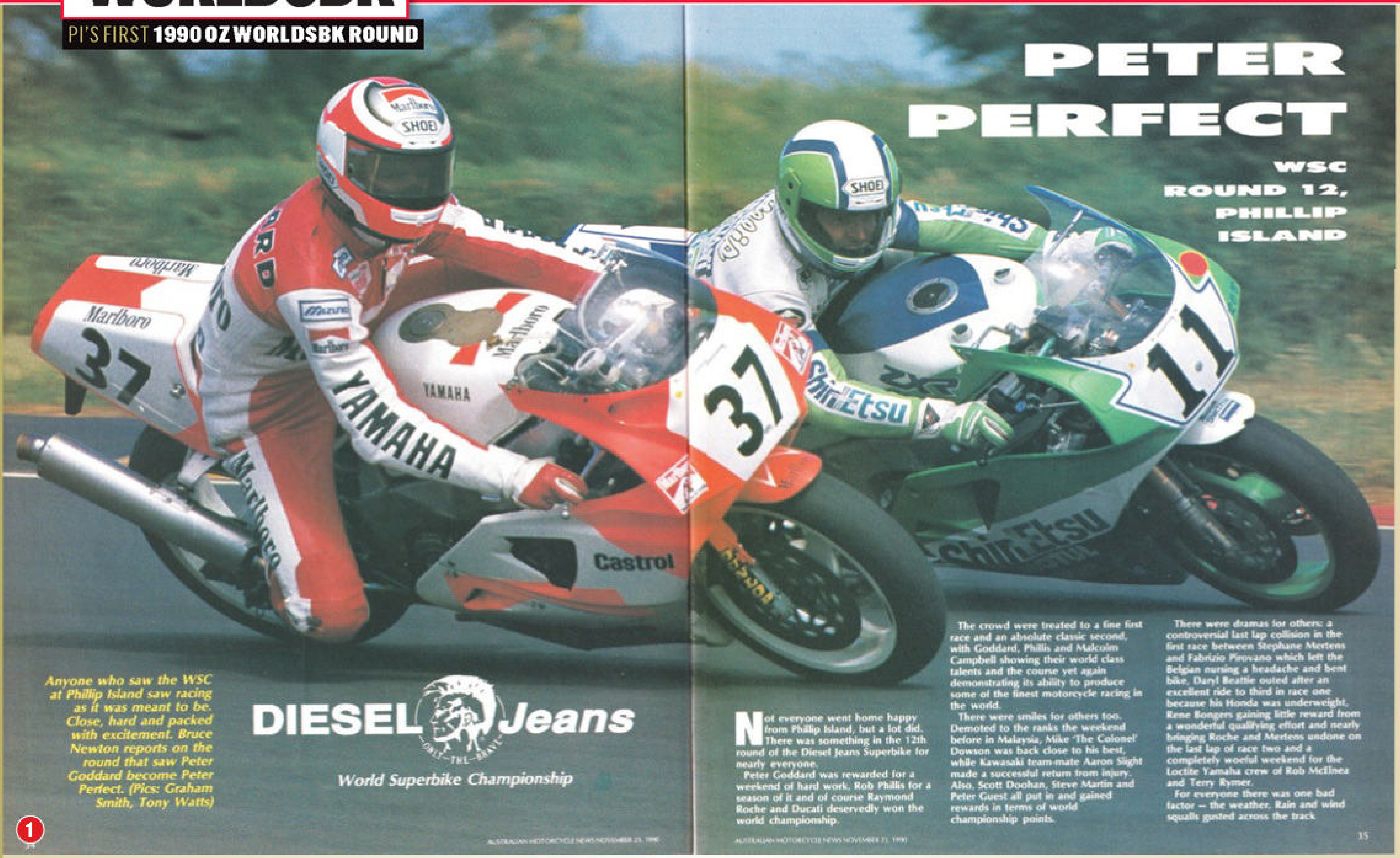
Fastest lap: Pirovano - 1m39.54s

RACE 2 RESULTS

POS	RIDER	BIKE	TIME
1	Rob Phillis	Kawasaki	36m44.82s
2	Peter Goddard	Yamaha	+0.04s
3	Malcolm Campbell	Honda	+0.06s
4	Michael Dowson	Kawasaki	+9.75s
5	Fabrizio Pirovano	Yamaha	+20.58s
6	Scott Doohan	Honda	+26.22s
7	Aaron Slight	Kawasaki	+30.64s
8	Raymond Roche	Ducati	+31.00s
9	Stéphane Mertens	Honda	+34.25s
10	Steve Martin	Suzuki	+36.64s

30 starters, 22 finishers

Fastest lap and new record: Campbell - 1m39.08s



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PETER PERFECT

WSC ROUND 12, PHILLIP ISLAND

Anyone who saw the WSC at Phillip Island saw racing as it was meant to be. Close, hard and packed with excitement. Bruce Newton reports on the round that saw Peter Goddard become Peter Perfect. (Pics: Graham Smith, Tony Watts)

DIESEL Jeans
ONLY THE BRAVE
World Superbike Championship

Not everyone went home happy from Phillip Island, but a lot did. There was something in the 12th round of the Diesel Jeans Superbike for nearly everyone.

Peter Goddard was rewarded for a weekend of hard work, Rob Phillis for a season of it and of course Raymond Roche and Ducati deservedly won the world championship.

The crowd were treated to a fine first race and an absolute classic second, with Goddard, Phillis and Malcolm Campbell showing their world class talents and the course yet again demonstrating its ability to produce some of the finest motorcycle racing in the world.

There were smiles for others too. Demoted to the ranks the weekend before in Malaysia, Mike 'The Colonel' Dowson was back close to his best, while Kawasaki team-mate Aaron Slight made a successful return from injury. Also, Scott Doohan, Steve Martin and Peter Guest all put in and gained rewards in terms of world championship points.

There were dramas for others: a controversial last lap collision in the first race between Stephane Mertens and Fabrizio Pirovano which left the Belgian nursing a headache and bent bike, Daryl Beattie outed after an excellent ride to third in race one because his Honda was underweight, Rene Bongers gaining little reward from a wonderful qualifying effort and nearly bringing Roche and Mertens undone on the last lap of race two and a completely woeful weekend for the Loctite Yamaha crew of Rob McElnea and Terry Rymer.

For everyone there was one bad factor – the weather. Rain and wind squalls gusted across the track

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for the last five or so laps.

"I was also short-shifting down the straight to try and not give anything away and keep the surprise element up my sleeve.

"It was a horn race between the three of us, and Wally especially rode the wheels of his bike to catch me and Pete. I was kinda disappointed he didn't win – he rode like a champion. It would have been interesting if the race had a couple of more laps to run."

The plaudits for 'Wally' Campbell, the reigning Aussie superbike champion, were deserved, as he had to carve his way through from 12th on lap one. By lap 14 he was in third, but Goddard and Phillis were already miles down the road.

Still, he wasn't discouraged and chipped away at the leaders over the next five or six laps until he was on their tail. Despite a new lap record of 1m39.08s on the final lap, Campbell finished third, just 0.06sec behind Phillis, who had drafted past Goddard to take the win by 0.04sec after a pulsating sprint to the line. At the time it was one of the closest finishes in the three years of WorldSBK competition.

Campbell's lap record was set an average speed of 161.69km/h; for reference Jonathan Rea's current benchmark of 1m30.075s has an average speed of 177.652km/h.

With all the maelstrom out front, it was difficult to keep abreast of the happenings behind, but Dowson was fourth ahead of Pirovano, Doohan, Slight, Roche, Mertens and Martin.

Roche was crowned world champion, but there was a nervous moment on the final lap when Bongers went down in front of him after clipping the back of Mertens' machine. He remained upright and banked Ducati's first WorldSBK title as well – with plenty more to come…

The final word went to Roche: "Today I rode very slowly and next weekend I want to win in New Zealand." He got close with second in Race 1, with the Manfeild races won in convincing fashion by Rymer and Phillis.

However, all the buzz was still about what went down at Phillip Island the week before, as WorldSBK firmly planted its roots at the iconic circuit – and it was fitting that Aussie superbike pioneers like Phillis and Campbell played such starring roles.

DESPITE A NEW LAP RECORD ON THE FINAL LAP, CAMPBELL FINISHED THIRD, JUST 0.06SEC BEHIND PHILLIS

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1. The opening spread of AMCN's coverage featured Phillis and Goddard side by side heading into Turn 10

2. Dowson was in great form, and finished with 3-4 results

3. Mertens was third in the 1990 WorldSBK title

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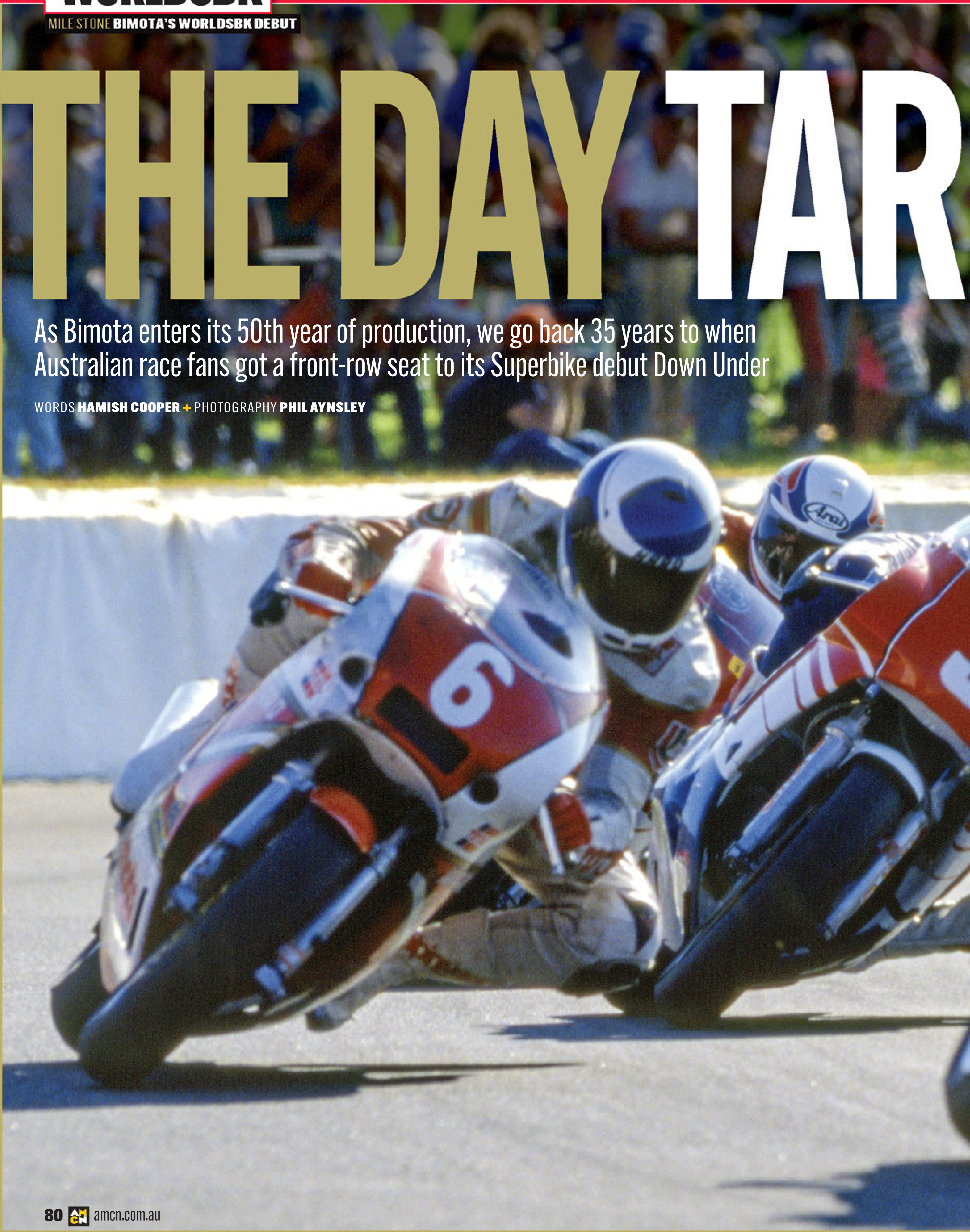
THE DAY TAR

As Bimota enters its 50th year of production, we go back 35 years to when Australian race fans got a front-row seat to its Superbike debut Down Under

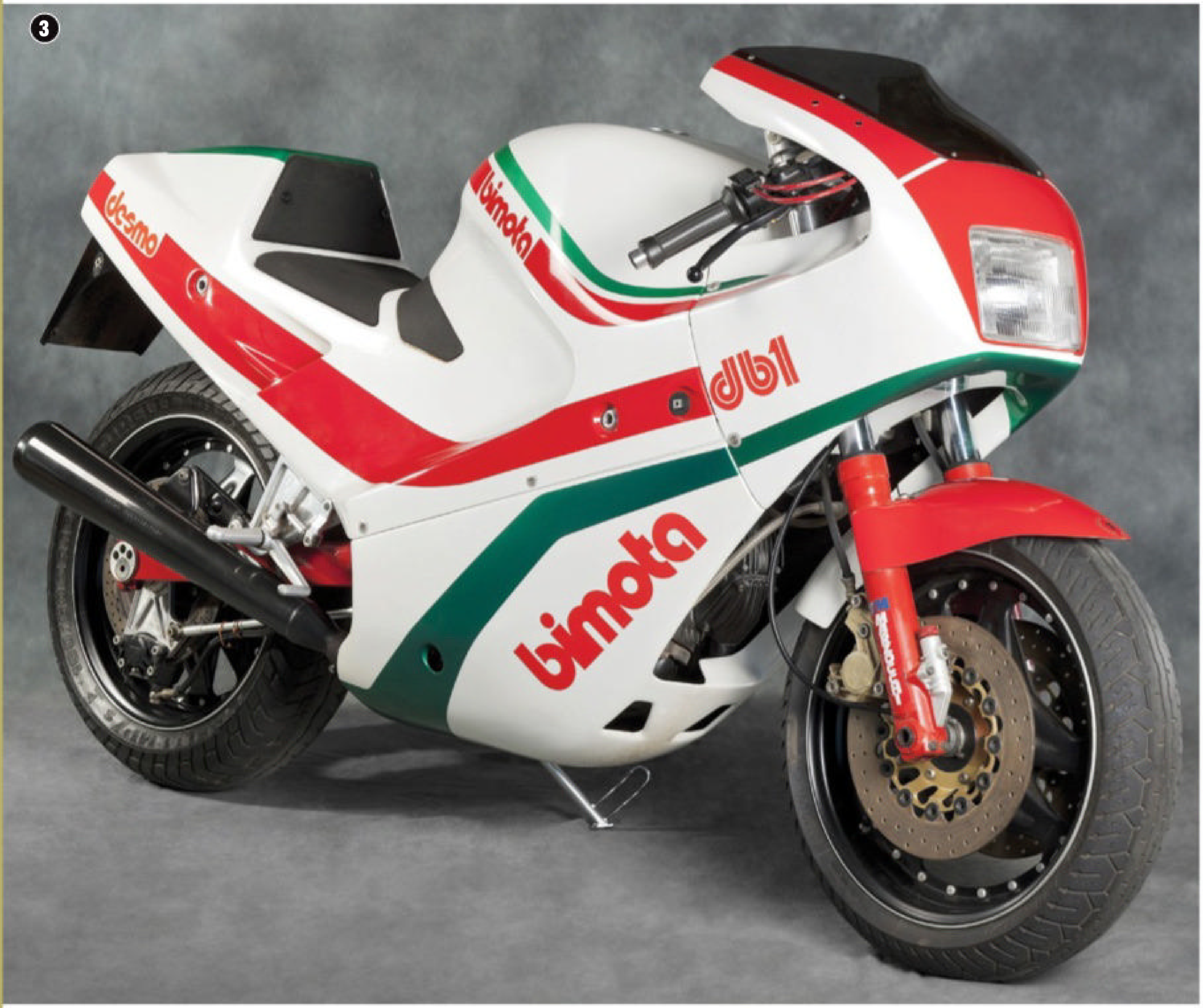
WORDS **HAMISH COOPER** + PHOTOGRAPHY **PHIL AYNSLEY**



DOZZI CRIED

September 1988 was a watershed moment in Australian motorcycle racing. While Phillip Island was in its final redevelopment phase to host a round of the 500cc Grand Prix World Championship in April 1989, the penultimate round of the inaugural Superbike World Championship was being fought out at Sydney's Oran Park. It was the first time a round of any world road racing motorcycle championship had been held in Australia.

After a noisy weekday lunchtime demonstration run in Sydney's CBD – the first time racing motorcycles had been allowed on the road in NSW – the Superbike circus rolled into Sydney's twisting, concrete-lined, 2.6km Oran Park circuit.



THE GOWANLOCH DB1

ALONG WITH Bob Brown's TT2 Pantah, raced by a young Kevin Magee in the early 1980s, the Gowanloch/Italspares DB1 is part of Australia's Ducati legend.

"The Bimota DB1 we raced at Bathurst and at Daytona's Battle of the Twins in 1988 weighed 132kg with oil but no petrol and put out 100bhp when we stroked it to 983cc," Ian Gowanloch remembers.

In its ultimate form, Australian 250-350GP champion Chris Oldfield qualified second at Daytona and finished fourth, against the world's top twins.

"The basis of it was the second DB1 race frame ever made," says Gowanloch. "Arthur Davis and I started with a 750 F1 engine but one day Pete Smith (another famous Ducati tuner) suggested he could stroke it from 61.5mm to 74mm."

The bike competed in several classes, including against current Superbikes at Bathurst in 1986, as a 750. Eventually it was enlarged to 944cc and also 985cc with cast-iron cylinder liners. The Daytona expedition was funded by prizemoney Oldfield won on it at the BEARS Sound of Thunder in New Zealand in 1988.

WHY AUSTRALIA AND NZ?

IN THE process of promoting the idea in Europe of a world Superbike championship, former US racer Steve McLaughlin created an unlikely alliance with New Zealand sports marketing firm Global Sports and Promotions. They created Sports Marketing which, as well as establishing the Superbike World Championship in 1988, became a pioneer in getting guaranteed worldwide television coverage. Even the GP organizers hadn't achieved consistent coverage on this scale. However, the venture was always cash-strapped and the NZ round was dropped after two seasons.

> ***TARDOZZI'S BIMOTA WAS THE FUTURISTIC-LOOKING YAMAHA-POWERED YB4EI***

Bimota's Davide Tardozzi was leading the points table. The 29-year-old, who now is Ducati's MotoGP team manager, had won five races in the new championship, two more than any of his rivals. These wins included the very first race of the season, and Tardozzi looked to be in dominant form. Bimota's efforts to attend all nine rounds with Tardozzi and teammate rising star Stephane Mertens underlined the commitment it had to the world championship.

It had grasped the opportunity to turn racing success into road sales and very nearly pulled off a world title in the process.

Tardozzi's Bimota was the futuristic-looking Yamaha-powered YB4EI, a development of the Bimota that Virginio Ferrari had taken to victory in the 1987 TT-F1 world championship.

Despite taking the crown from Honda hero Joey Dunlop, Bimota had withdrawn from TT-F1 racing in 1988 to concentrate on the upcoming Superbike World Championship. It had revealed the YB4EI at Italy's Milan Show in late 1987, Europe's most important motorcycle expo. The YB4EI was a fuel-injected road-legal version of Bimota's TT-F1 winner. Bimota claimed it could quickly meet the requirement to manufacture 200 examples to go racing in world Superbikes.

The Bimota brand was no stranger to Australian motorcycle fanatics. Its tubular space-framed chassis had been around local racing for over 10 years powered by two-stroke engines. By 1988 its DB1 model had achieved almost mythical status among Ducati fans courtesy of rider Chris Oldfield's exploits on the big-bore Gowanloch/Italspares-sponsored version in Australia and at Daytona in the US.

However, the YB4IE took Bimota to a new level. Its technology was groundbreaking and it would take several years for the big players in the world motorcycle market to catch up.

Today we take for granted aluminium perimeter frames and fuel injection on roadbikes. Bimota was the first company to produce a road model with such a frame. Previously they had only been seen on GP bikes.

The YB4IE, along with Ducati's 851 Superbike, also pioneered fuel injection on a factory racing motorcycle intended for production as a sportsbike. But it should be noted that Kawasaki's 1980 Z1000H was the world's first road model to be fuel injected.

The YB4IE was powered by Yamaha's now ageing FZ750 five-valve Genesis engine. Taking the project into a new era were the fabricated (not cast) aviation-quality aluminium twin-spar frame, which helped shave over 25kg from the standard model, and fuel injection.

Weber throttle bodies, with a single injector on each cylinder, were controlled by a Magneti Marelli ECU. High-tech for the time, it meant the

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1. The DB1 racer at Bathurst in 1987 – it's now part of Aussie racing legend

2. Last-minute adjustments at Bathurst in 1986

3. The all-Italian DB1 in production form

4. Inside the Bimota WorldSBK pit at Oran Park in 1988

5. Oldfield flashes down the mountain at Bathurst

THE NUMBERS GAME

SOME BIG QUESTIONS surrounding the first season of world Superbike are still unanswered. Bimota probably built the 200 YB4s demanded by authorities to go racing but probably not in 1988. Would Yamaha have been able to provide 200 engines straight away and could Bimota have had the capacity and supply chain to build and deliver them? Similarly, Ducati mysteriously failed to appear for the last two rounds of 1988 despite rider Marco Lucchinelli qualifying third at Estoril with race finishes of third and fourth keeping him in title contention. There is a theory that the 851 Ducati may not have passed scrutineering Down Under. Questions also arose over the Ducati factory's ability to manufacture the required 200 production units in 1988 that matched Lucchinelli's racer, which looked more like a prototype in development.

FITTED WITH THE BEST MARZOCCHI FORK AND BREMBO BRAKES

1. Mertens leads Pirovano and Merkel at Oran Park

2. Davide Tardozzi

3. All action in the Bimota pits; the company's investment in WorldSBK nearly reached the pinnacle with a world title

4. The YB4 brought a wealth of technology and exotica to the Superbike paddock, including the aluminium perimiter frame

5. Tardozzi's YB4EI in for a tyre change - he scored 11-10 results at Oran Park

6. The flying Italian, Provano

7. Works of art for the era...

system could be electronically altered for circuit conditions to change power and torque delivery. However, typical of computers of the time, a small type of floppy disc had to be inserted into the system to change the setting!

The ace up the sleeve for Bimota, compared to the factory-spec Yamaha being raced in the series by Fabrizio Pirovano, was its GP-like dimensions. When you compare the basics now it seems amazing that Pirovano was vying for the championship lead on what essentially was a modified roadbike.

For example, his upright riding style was dictated by the fact his handlebars were mounted above the top steering yoke, a requirement to make his production-based Yamaha legal for world Superbikes.

His FZ750 weighed 200kg, had a wheelbase of 1490mm and a steering head angle of 25.5 degrees. The YB4 weighed 170kg, and had a 1390mm wheelbase and 24.3-degree steering head angle.

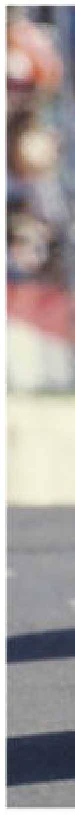
Pirovano's steel frame had bolted-on components, as it was derived from a street model, whereas the Bimota's aluminium frame was designed for one purpose: to win on the racetrack. To this end it was fitted with the best Marzocchi racing fork and Brembo brakes available at the time. Bimota's ambition to end its inaugural Superbike campaign as champion was underlined by the attendance of Dr Federico Martini at Oran Park. A former Ducati engineer, the YB4 was his 'baby'.

Martini had joined Bimota in 1983 after one of its founders, Massimo Tamburini, left to join Cagiva. He was responsible for the design and production of the DB1. Launched in 1985, it was Bimota's first all-Italian model, powered by the 750cc Pantah engine used in Ducati's F1 street and race model. Strong worldwide sales saved Bimota from potential bankruptcy and Martini soon designed and engineered the YB4 TT-F1-winner of 1987.

Now his YB4EI was on the verge of winning in its debut season. But nothing is guaranteed in motorcycle racing. The Australian round had brought a host of what today would be called wildcards out of the woodwork. The entry list of nearly 30 riders included several local future world stars, who would humiliate the established international hierarchy.

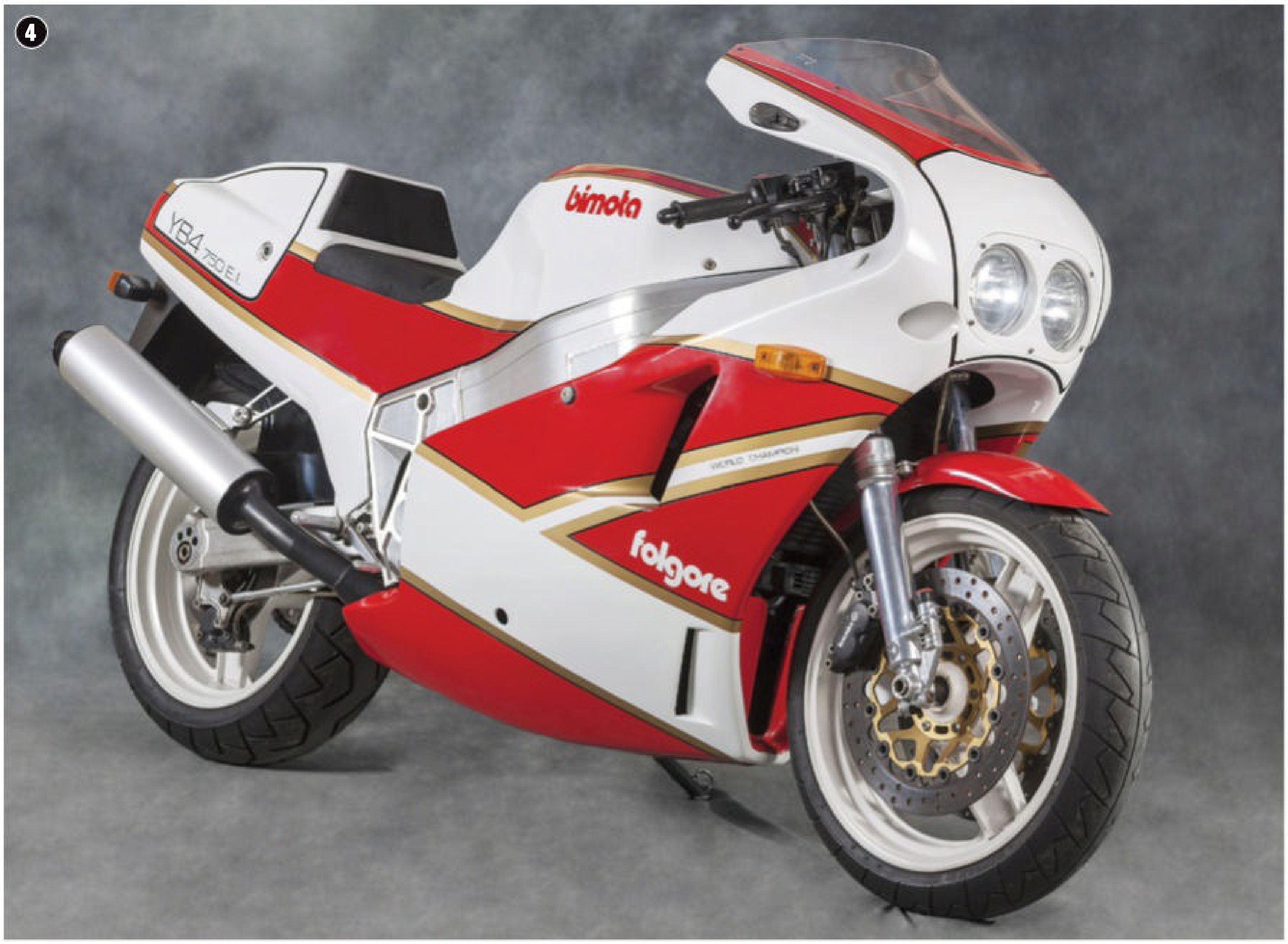
Chief among them was a young Michael Doohan. Part of the Warren Willing-run Australian Marlboro Yamaha team with Michael Dowson, he would qualify on pole and easily win both 39-lap races. While there is no denying their riding ability, the Yamahas of Doohan and Dowson were factory exotica, employing the alloy frames homologated for racing in the US, not world Superbike. The Doohan-Dowson one-two finish in both races might have been spectacular but it didn't have a huge bearing on the championship points table.

The race-within-the-race for the overall title was crucial for Tardozzi, leading by 6.5 points from American Fred Merkel (Honda RC30) with Pirovano also in contention. Martini must have been feeling confident as Mertens and Tardozzi had finished one-two at the second race of the previous round at Estoril in Spain. Tardozzi had won the first there with Mertens second. However, a practice crash left Tardozzi nursing torn hamstring and groin



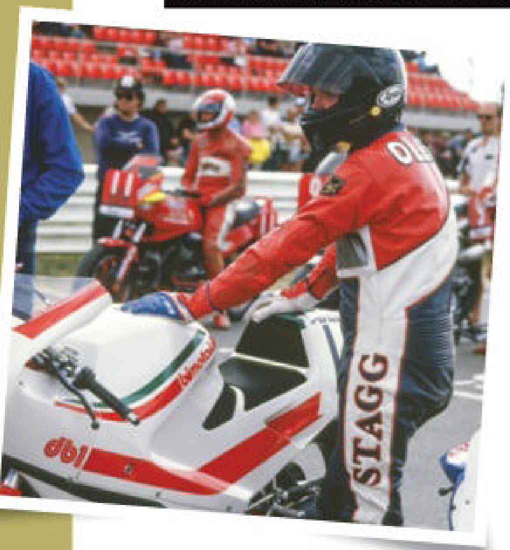
PRIVATEER EFFORT

YOUNG KIWI rider Andrew Stroud stunned observers at the 1988 world Superbike finale at Manfeild by qualifying 0.7 seconds behind Davide Tardozzi on a privateer Bimota YB4. However, so close was qualifying that Stroud ended up on the second row. Stroud actually led the field into the first corner in a wet race one. His efforts showed the potential of even a standard-spec YB4IE. This machine actually resurfaced for sale a few years back in “as ridden in 1988” condition.



HISTORY NEARLY REPEATS

THE LAST time a Bimota raced in the Australian round of world Superbike was 2000 when Anthony Gobert took an unlikely win on a Suzuki TL1000 V-twin-powered Bimota SB8R in race one of the season’s second round. Gambling on full wet tyres, the 25-year-old blitzed the field, despite a 20km/h speed deficit on the main straight.



1. Beautiful aerial shot of Oldfiled at Bathurst

2. The YB4E1 was the envy of just about every other rider on the inaugural WorldSBK grid

3. Campbell lines up a pass on Mertens coming on to the front straight at Oran Park

muscles. And then the dominance of the locals shone through.

Rob Phillis (Kawasaki) qualified third, followed by Richard Scolyer (Honda) and Malcolm Campbell (Honda). Merkel was sixth on the grid with Pirovano eighth. Tardozzi was way down in 14th, but held his nerve in both races, finishing 11th and 10th to retain his championship points lead by a wafer-thin margin of 2.5 points ahead of Merkel and Pirovano. Merkel's battling fourth and third places had him equal with Pirovano (6-7).

The event had attracted 18,000 spectators, the largest crowd ever to Oran Park. This was more than had turned out in 1971 to watch 15-time world champion Giacomo Agostini race his MV against locals. world Superbikes had arrived Down Under and were here to stay.

However, the season was to end in tears, literally, for Tardozzi in the season finale at Manfeild, New Zealand, a week later. Despite being on pole, Tardozzi finished fifth in the first race, then crashed on the warm-up for the second. Despite tearfully pleading with the team to give him Mertens' YB4, he was out of the race and championship. Salt was rubbed into the wound when Mertens swept to victory with a brave overtaking move late in the race. Merkel struggled to finish fifth on worn tyres but it was enough for the American star to become the first world Superbike champion.

Tardozzi ended up third in the championship behind Pirovano, while Bimota came second in the manufacturers' championship behind Honda and ahead of Yamaha. But Bimota's big win that year was a sales record for its product range, underlying the significance of the new world championship for motorcycle brands.

THE SEASON WAS TO END IN TEARS, LITERALLY, FOR TARDOZZI

HISTORY LESSON

"THE LIGHTNESS is the secret." Those are the words of Massimo Tamburini, the original brains behind Bimota.

This tiny operation has had a major impact on motorcycling since 1973. It survived by racing what it sold, starting with a Honda CB750.

Tamburini and his friends turned a 220kg production road-going motorcycle into a handcrafted piece of two-wheeled racing art weighing just 170kg. Soon customer orders flooded in and what started as a hobby for Valerio Bianchi, Giuseppe Morri and Tamburini became Bimota (an abbreviation of all their surnames).

The little company first hit world headlines in 1980 when GP privateer Jon Ekerold won the 350cc world championship on a Bimota powered by a Yamaha two-stroke engine. Bimota later broke new ground in motorcycle design with the centre-hub-steering Tesi and GP-inspired two-stroke Due V of the 1990s.

Brave efforts but Bimota will be remembered most for its YB4 model. Bimota manufactured YB4EI customer bikes from 1987 to 1989 - 19 of them the YB4EI-R competition version.

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WORDS **NEIL MORRISON** + PHOTOGRAPHY **GOLD&GOOSE**

ERED

Of all the storylines promising to light up MotoGP in 2023, the relationship between new factory Ducati teammates is among **the most intriguing**

Reigning world champ Francesco Bagnaia is teaming up with Enea Bastianini, who's bold, confident and talented in equal measure, inside Ducati's factory garage this year. Bastianini was the sport's breakout star during the 2022 season, posting four victories aboard a year-old satellite bike, providing Bagnaia with more than a few headaches along the way. Recent evidence suggests sparks will fly now the Italian compatriots are vying to become factory number one.

The pair was present as Ducati recently launched its 2023 MotoGP and WorldSBK programs in the chilly surroundings of Madonna di Campiglio, a swanky ski resort four hours' drive from Milan. It was a setting fit to celebrate the factory's double success in 2022, the first year in which it won the rider's championships in both series.

And aside from the slightly laboured revelation that the factory's two reigning world champions – Bagnaia in MotoGP and Alvaro Bautista in WorldSBK – will run the number-one plate during their respective title

defences, the real interest lay in seeing the two men who battled hardest on track last year wearing the same colours and talking openly about their hopes for the MotoGP season ahead.

No one pushed Bagnaia harder on track than Bastianini did throughout 2022, a year when the pair shared 11 wins between them. Riding in Gresini Ducati colours on a year-old bike, Bastianini consistently gave the impression that leaving a mark on his future teammate in high-tension battles at Misano, Aragon and Sepang was of greater importance than the greater good of Ducati – a development that enriched the final chapters of last year's series, even if it appeared to shorten the lifespan of Ducati management.

PLAY NICE

Replacing the genial Jack Miller, many have predicted there will be none of the friendliness in the Ducati garage from the past two years now that Bastianini is adorned in factory red. But all associated with the project were keen to stress the intensity witnessed in last year's key battles will be more restrained and respectful throughout the 21 races ahead.

"We've known each other for a long time, from when we were racing with the pocketbikes," said Bagnaia, when asked to describe his new teammate. "The correct answer is he's a bastard as he pushes like a bastard," came the quip. "But no, he's a smart and very competitive guy. We want the same thing and we will do the maximum to achieve it. So, the battle between us will be intense, but we have to be intelligent and respectful to have a good relationship.

"It'll be different because with Jack

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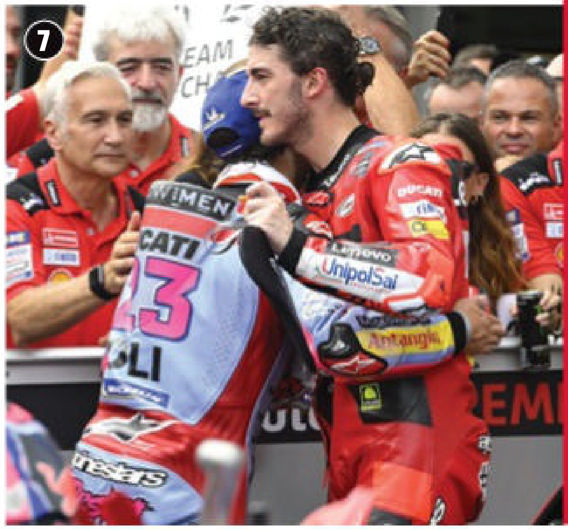
“NOW HE’S MY TEAMMATE, HE’S A WORLD CHAMPION AND OUR RELATIONSHIP IS REALLY GOOD”



1. Bastianini’s first spin on the factory Ducati at Valencia last November

2. Where the GP journey began: Bastianini in the Red Bull Rookies in 2013

3. Happy campers, but will the convivilaity continue?

4. Bastianini has acknowledged he has to become more consistent

5. Junior Burgers: Enea (left) and Pecco during their MiniMoto days

6. Bastianini meets Aussie legend, Casey Stoner

7. Relax, they aren’t wrestling...

8. As tense as it got in 2022: the duo didn’t give an inch in a nerve-racking Malaysian GP

everything was settled already. With Enea everything starts from zero and the battle of last year made a lot of noise. We are both Italian, people are always searching for duels. So it’s more from outside this pressure.

“But it wasn’t like this. We have a great relationship – we were always speaking. It will be very important to be smart this year, to understand that we have to [work] together to be in front and then in the race is another story. Everyone can do what they want, but in the box we have to work well and I think we are smart enough to understand that.”

Sporting Director Paolo Ciabatti was also keen to stress the new responsibilities Bastianini has this year – presumably to refrain from battling with his teammate in any circumstance.

“The relationship with Pecco and Jack was a special one,” he said. “They were also teammates in Pramac for two years before and I would say I never saw something similar in all my career between the two teammates.

“Now Enea is in a factory team. When you’re in a factory team you’re going to have the same material, the same technical support, but also responsibilities that maybe you don’t feel in an independent team. I expected it to be more manageable last year than it was because when you’re racing for an independent Ducati team, there is probably always an extra motivation to compete with the factory guys.

“In an independent team, it’s a different feeling, like you want to compete with the red guys. More because it was a rookie year for the [Gresini] team with Ducati. Obviously Pecco wants to retain the number one and Enea wants to keep growing. But now, it’s his third year in MotoGP, in a factory team and he’s more mature. I think we can expect a good cooperation.

Even ‘The Beast’, who spent the evening dinner sitting cordially alongside his 2023 teammate,

conceded he will occasionally have to put Ducati first in the 21 races ahead.

"(Racing) with Pecco, I only tried to do my race all the time. Now he's my teammate, he's a world champion and our relationship is really good. I think we'll continue like this. Last year I was fast, I tried to modify my approach, and I think I have to modify it again for this year, not to be (too) aggressive."

Though just how long this lasts no one can be really sure.

ITALY'S NEW HOPE

As well as competing in the same team as the world champion, Bastianini must adapt to Ducati's GP23 as well as the new squad around him. Alberto Giribuola, his crew chief of the past two years, has defected to KTM. Marco Rigamonti, formerly Johann Zarco's right-hand man, is now in the Italian's corner, a relationship that may take some time to foster.

"The first contact with the '23 bike (at Valencia in November) was good and I think I will be closer and in the next test we when we try some new parts," said Bastianini, who acknowledged improving his speed in the early laps of the race is a priority for the year ahead. "I have a new crew chief this year and my approach during the test at Valencia was cool. We know during the season can arrive some problems, but I have to always stay focused. The factory [team] approach will be a little bit different, but I'm not nervous about this, only motivated and supercharged!"

> **"I'VE TRIED TO IMPROVE DURING THE WINTER. SOMETIME IS IMPORTANT TO BE ALWAYS AT THE 100 PERCENT"**

There was an acknowledgement of weaknesses last year that are being worked on. First, consistency. To challenge for the title, Bastianini must improve on this aspect after only amassing nine top-six finishes last term. Then, with 21 sprint races looming, he's also aware he must improve his speed in the early laps.

"My style is to conserve at the start so I can push more after. I have to close this gap because for the sprint races, that could be a problem for me. But I think we can modify it.

"I've tried to improve during the winter. Sometime is important to be always at the 100 percent because we are training with the motocross bike and you have to stay concentrated because it's dangerous. Also, if you train a lot, you have a greater possibility to crash. And we have

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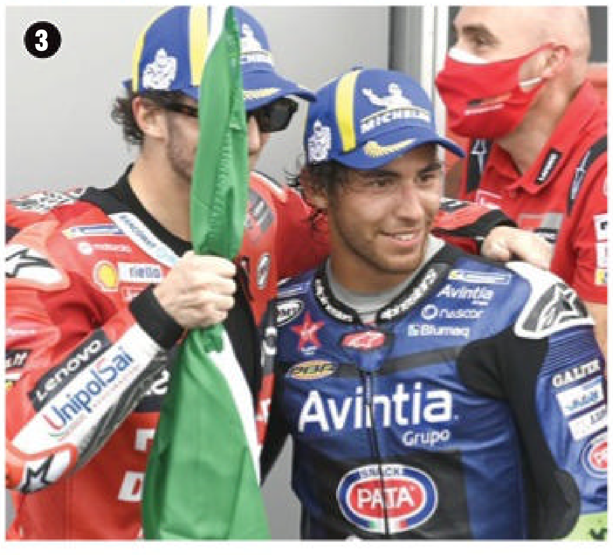
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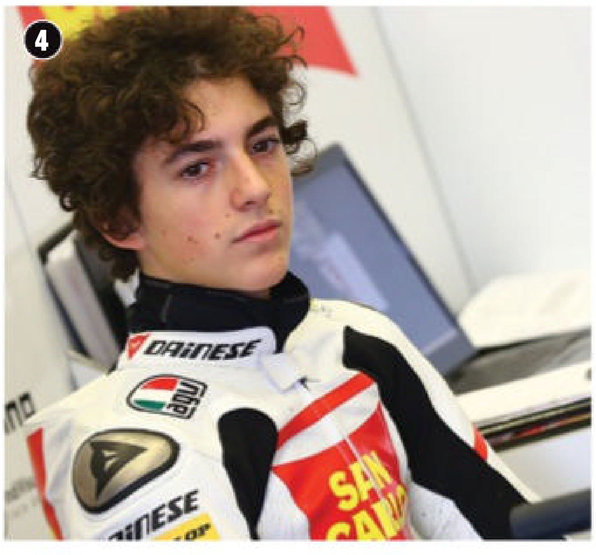
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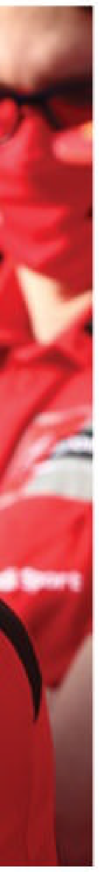

1. This was about as far apart as they got at Sepang in 2022
2. Ducati's top brass, Paolo Ciabatti and Gigi Dall'Igna, in 2021
3. The two Italians in 2021, which was Enea's first year in MotoGP
4. A fresh-faced and clean-shaven Pecco in 2013
5. The Le Mans Moto3 podium in 2015: (L to R) Bastianini, Romano Fenati and Bagnaia
6. Where all the magic begins on the Ducati Desmosedici
7. Just two days after winning the world title, Pecco was back at it testing an early version of the 2023 machine

to save the body for the championship. I think the first Sprint race will be a test for everybody. We'll speak with Alvaro because he has made a lot of sprint races (in WorldSBK). But then the most important thing is to try it for real for the first time on the Saturday at Portimao."

Not that dethroning his teammate will be easy. Once Bagnaia changed his approach after a costly fall at the Sachsenring last June, he was imperious in the following nine races. Six wins and three further podiums overturned a 91-point deficit into Ducati's first riders' championship in 15 years.

"It will be very difficult to defend the number one," Bagnaia conceded. "But I'm here for that because it's true, I won a title, but I don't feel satisfied with it. I feel that I want many more and I want to continue pushing to be competitive, to be in front and to work to be better in every race. So I will try to defend it and I'm sure that, if everything goes okay, we can be up front."

Asked what the biggest lesson from his first premier-class title year was, Bagnaia immediately shot back: "Don't crash!" referring to his five DNFs from last year. "It was something that I tried to learn and sincerely I think already last year we did a good step in front in terms of mistakes. I lost a lot of points last year, crashing five times. I also lost the race in Indonesia because I finished 15th. But anyway, the biggest lesson is to remain calm, think race by race and don't commit the mistakes of being nervous or to try to do everything in one corner."

And both were keen to stress the threats posed by names beyond the factory team. "To answer who will be (the toughest opponent) is like when you are the teacher at school before starting the lesson. 'Bagnaia?' 'I'm here'. 'Marquez?' 'I'm here'. Because everyone has a possibility to fight for the win and for the title. I think Marc will be at 100 percent. (Fabio) Quartararo, Enea. I think (Franco) Morbidelli will be okay.

"(Miguel) Oliveira with Aprilia will be so competitive, as will (Brad) Binder." For his part, Bastianini pointed to Repsol Honda's leading man as the biggest threat. "Marc is Marc. He's won eight titles and will be at 100 percent. It will be so difficult to battle with him."

DON'T REINVENT THE WHEEL

The presentation also revealed Ducati has no plans to revolutionise its MotoGP racer for the upcoming year, hinting it has learned valuable lessons from the past.

"[In previous years] we had to take a lot of risks. But last year taught us some breaks from development can help us," General Manager Gigi Dall'Igna said. While the search for extra horsepower is never-ending, and a number of revised aero packages will be revealed at next month's Sepang test, this year's Desmosedici will be an evolution of the bike which won the coveted

"WE'RE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR IMPROVEMENTS, BECAUSE YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT THE COMPETITION WILL DO"

triple crown in 2022.

While it's difficult to point to a major flaw in the bike's make up, all involved are keen to spend the early races scampering to find a settled base setting – something that ruined Bagnaia's start to last year.

"When I started testing with the new bike last February, I was a bit lost because the things that I was doing better the year before was impossible to replicate," Bagnaia recalled. "So at the first race I asked to stop and to return as much as possible to the old bike, and in that moment we started working so much better.

"This year is not a revolution, just a little evolution of the of last year bike and I'm confident – we tried it already in Valencia – and for the first approach it was competitive, it was good, it was better already."

Ciabatti agreed: "We had a difficult beginning in 2022. Probably some of the developments that were tested in Jerez (at the end of '21) and then improved in a simulation before the Sepang test didn't really work in the way we expected. We had to go a bit backwards. We used this hybrid engine for the factory guys, and I think we learned our lesson that cost us time and we lost some opportunities in the first part of the season.

"We're always looking for improvements, because you never know what the competition will do. But once we reach a level of competitiveness with our bikes, we just look at small things here and there. We don't want to disrupt the whole balance we have in the bike. If we can get around three or four horsepower more, always welcome. Some other areas we're working on. The aerodynamics will have some new ideas to be tested in Sepang, but basically the '23 bike is going to be an evolution of the '22 bike. If you look at the numbers: 12 races won, 16 pole positions out of 20, this means don't fix something that isn't broken!"

1. Pecco jokingly 'attacks' Bastianini as 'revenge' for his stressful antics in Sepang

2. The spoils started to arrive after an imperious second half of the season

3. Nervous wait: in the pit box before the final round of 2022

4. 'The Beast' in his new factory environment

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THE HURT

LOCKER

Australian riders Toby Price and Daniel Sanders spill the beans on what really went down at the 2023 Dakar Rally

The 2023 Dakar Rally will be remembered across the globe for a bunch of reasons, but for Aussies it will forever be the one that got away. Two-time Dakar motorcycle champion, Toby Price, missed the top step of the podium by a mere 43 seconds, the closest winning margin in the 45-year history of the infamous race. Forty-three seconds after 14 long days with more than 44 hours of race time, with the win going to Price's Red Bull KTM factory teammate, Kevin Benavides – the Argentinian notching up his second Dakar victory in an absolute thriller.

Heading into the final stage, Price held a slender 12-second lead over Benavides which is unthinkable considering the ground covered in all kinds of conditions to get to the final-day showdown between the duo.

The final stage was made all the more interesting by the field starting in reverse order, as well the all-important hidden waypoints reduced considerably in diameter which made them even harder to find.

"To do forty odd-hours of racing in stage times and to lose it by 43 seconds is a tough one to swallow," Price so aptly stated after the race, which was the longest in over a decade.

There's no denying Benavides rode a great race and, looking from the outside in, his event was not too dissimilar from the strategy used by Price. However, there were some crucial moments that appeared to work in the Argentine's favour.

It's been said many times before but it does ring true: you rarely see an unlucky champion and, at Dakar, you need all the cards to fall your way.

SMART STRATEGY

Perhaps for the first time since his maiden Dakar appearance in 2015, Price was not at the top of the pre-race favourite list.

A 10th place at Dakar in 2022 along with recent injuries and yet more surgery after crashing in the final round of the 2022 Cross-Country Rallies World Championship last October put Price at long odds of being an absolute frontrunner.

The old boy, aged 35, was entering his ninth Dakar and many predicted it to be his last on a bike – another top-10 result looked likely. But then Price did what Price does and came up trumps in the official prologue, closely followed by fellow Aussie Daniel 'Chucky' Sanders on his factory GasGas.

1. Sanders during Stage 11, finally feeling better after his earlier health woes

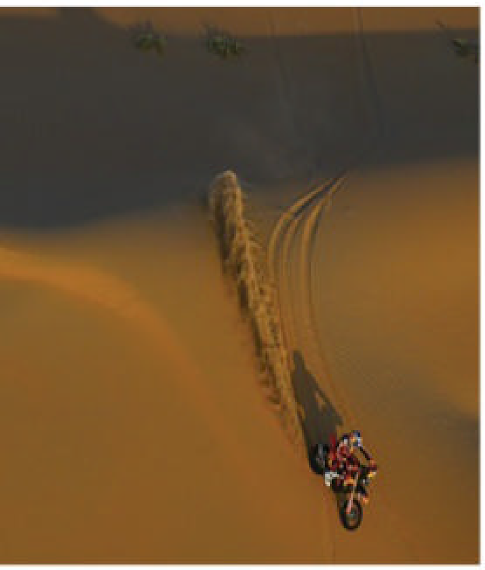
2. Stage 2 and the jersey's already feeling the effects

3. Navigation preparation: a daily Dakar ritual

4. Impressive view, but it was all business for Price in the prologue

5. Stage 2, and it's a break from the relentless sand

6. Price during Stage 5, when he was still trying to keep his powder dry ahead of a week-two offensive



"THAT LAST STAGE WAS A BIT OF A CHAOTIC THING"

Pricey was on, but prepared to let the race come to him.

"I planned to ride the first eight days conservatively but remain consistent, so I stayed within range of it all."

This was a smart strategy that paid off big-time. Winning stages at Dakar is great, but it also means the rider then leads out the next day with all the associated navigational pressure – and potentially making it easier for riders behind to follow the tracks and get a run on.

Navigational errors can cost precious time, while adding to the complexity of Dakar were a number of rule changes for 2023.

"The 160km/h speed limit that was introduced this year didn't change anything really; all manufacturers could run at that speed," said Price. "The bonus time for winning a stage came into play a bit more than we were predicting.

"We looked at last year's stage times and an average amount of time lost by a rider opening a stage was around 17 minutes, so we thought a five- or six-minute benefit wouldn't really come into play too much.

"But the roadbook seemed to explain what was to come on the stages a little better, so it was a little bit more direct. This year you only saw riders getting lost for up to 15 minutes and the average time lost by riders leading out would have averaged about the seven-minute mark so the bonus time did come into play – which I wasn't expecting. That is why I had to start gaining bonus time back in the second week and moving towards the front.

"By Stage 9 I began putting my head down a little bit which was all panning out and working good. I got the overall lead with a couple of stages to go."

Price began the second-last stage with a narrow 28-second lead over eventual third-placed rider Skyler Howes (Husqvarna), while Benavides was over two-and-a-half minutes behind. This is when the cards started falling in Benavides' direction.

Price's other Red Bull KTM teammate Matthias Walkner went down in a crash, and Benavides was the first on scene who stopped to call in the medivac chopper.

Benavides rejoined the race at the rear of the field and put on a charge and, after being awarded 23 minutes compassionate time for assisting Walkner, he won the stage.

Price now held a minimal 12-second lead heading into the final stage.

"That last stage was a bit of a chaotic thing with the event changing all the hidden waypoints in the first 40km and the last 30km," lamented Price. "And I ended up virtually starting the stage last and I ended up missing one of those waypoints by I don't think anything more than five or 10 metres. I had to turn around to go and get it. It was frustrating how that last day worked out with the reverse grid and the waypoints reduced to a 20m radius; it kicked me in the backside.

"There is a whole heap of different waypoints but the majority have a validation radius of 90m and, in some instances, up to 300m. But these WPP waypoints with a 20m radius in the middle of the desert, on the edge of the ocean can make them hard to find, especially when you are riding at 130km/h or 140km/h. That's the one that cost me a fair bit.

"Looking at sector times from 0-30km we were pretty much tied, even after missing a couple of waypoints, but I realised I missed them quite early. But the one that cost me, I was 1.5km down the track in camel grass where I was trying to concentrate riding the bike and keeping on two wheels. I feel like had put myself in a good position.

"Yeah, there was probably two or three stages where I could have gone 100 percent for the entire day and maybe that could have made the difference in the end.

"But then again it could have changed the entire direction of my race by leading out the next stage and kicked me in the backside.

"You can't really look back on the stages too much and say, 'I could have went faster on this one or I shouldn't have sand-bagged so much on this one.' I was in contention and in the right place, but it didn't pan out on the last stage and that was the one that got us."

1. Price rode an ultra-smart Dakar, with only Benavides able to best him

2. Above and beyond: Sanders has company in Saudi's seemingly endless sand dunes

3. Early bird: Price at the start of stage five

4. 'Chucky' – and that he did when the dreaded lurgy hit...

5. Sand in his eye? Sanders at the end of stage 12

6. Price contemplates how a third Dakar crown just got away from him

2

1

3

"SAY THAT TO ANY PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE: YOU HAVE FIVE DAYS TO PREPARE FOR YOUR SPORT"

4

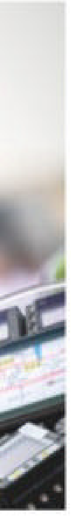
5

6

Price rise

Toby Price's Dakar record is rather impressive. Not many people stick at their job for nine years these days but Price has and managed to be in the top-three for six of them.

2015 → 3rd
2016 → 1st
2017 → DNF
2018 → 3rd
2019 → 1st
2020 → 3rd
2021 → DNF
2022 → 10th
2023 → 2nd



CHUCKY'S CHARM

For Daniel Sanders, the 2023 Dakar was one hell of a rollercoaster ride. The GasGas factory rider came in underdone. In fact, if Chucky was a chicken being prepared in one of Gordon Ramsay's kitchens, his level of underdone would have caused some serious food poisoning – which ironically, is exactly what almost caused him to withdraw from the event.

Sanders endured a horrific 2022 following injuries sustained in that year's Dakar. Despite winning the 2022 Hattah Desert Race, Sanders remained sidelined for most of the year with an elbow injury that would not heal, requiring further surgery.

"I considered not even going to Dakar being so under prepared. But Dakar is the main event of my contract and missing that race is like missing an entire year," Sanders said. "My family and Grabbo (Sanders' mentor Ben Grabham) all advised me to just go and get to the finish doing whatever I could do. I had two weeks riding motocross and enduro at home then I only had five days on the bike before this race. That was it. Nothing more. Say that to any professional athlete: you have five days to prepare for your sport.

"My goal was to try and win a stage and finish top-10. If I was on the old bike that I was confident on, I knew what it was capable of and what I could do with it. But I had no time on the new bike and I struggled so much trying to find a setup with having no strength in my arm, no testing with the team and no development in that bike for the year. I struggled a fair bit.

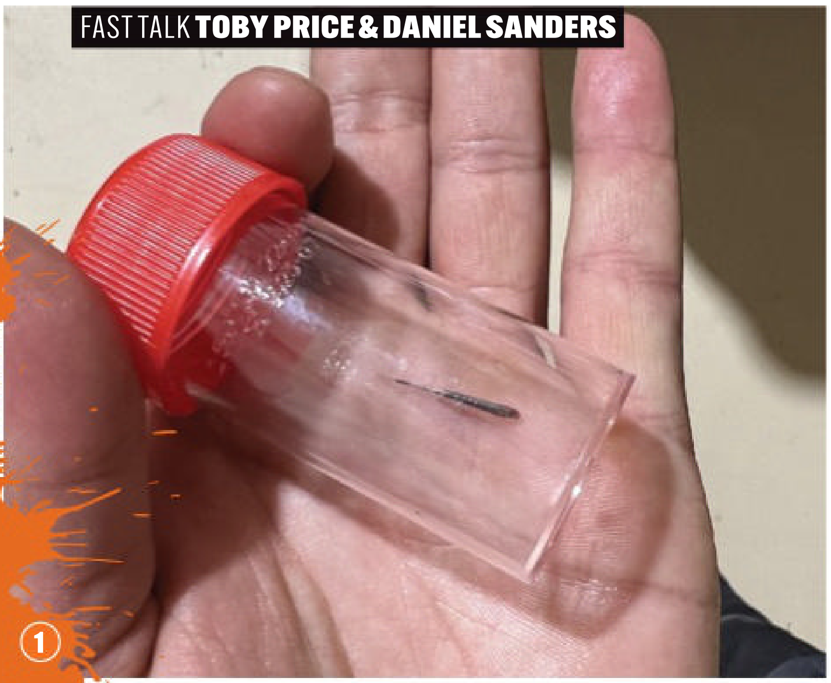
"It was a mission, that's for sure. I got the thorn in my arm on day two. Then a couple of days after that I got sick. The thing is I ate the same food as everyone else, so I don't know what it was.

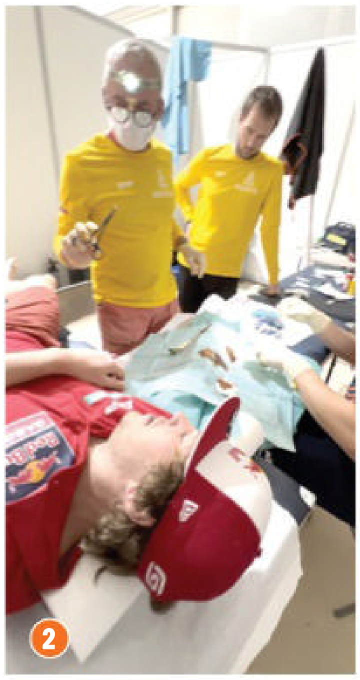
"Maybe someone sprinkled my food with some Arabian herbs? I had a mad dump after stage four. I was that impressed with it I almost took a photo of it. I nearly filled up the camper toilet. It was huge. If you got the biggest mixing bowl from your kitchen, you could fill it with what I shat out. It was absolutely insane.

"Then that night I felt like a spew and I started spewing and shitting. I was no good at all. I couldn't eat breakfast so I just had some coffee to get me to the start. I shat twice just getting there and just before the start after loading my roadbook I needed to shit again.

"It was a day with 100 percent sand and I knew I had pace so I just needed to cruise to not lose too much time. I just tried to latch on to riders that passed me and my stomach was grinding the entire day, I had no energy and was blurry in the head. It was not fun and it was a massive stage."

Sanders recovered from the food poisoning and chipped away at the race only to lose a chunk of time opening Stage 9 and, as Sanders put it: "I got put back 20 minutes and was thrown out of the podium battle. We know that it's not always the fastest rider that wins the race. And this year navigation didn't play a huge part – you've just got to be lucky on the right day and in the right spot. "You don't know what day is going to be a shit-fight with navigation. The second week of the race was fairly easy with shorter days. The first week we





“I SLAPPED A TREE ON STAGE TWO AND FELT A PIN PRICK AND MY MUSCLES FELT ALL FUNNY”

covered so much ground we were just 300km short of the overall stage times from last year – that was a demanding week. But the last week we were finishing stages by 9.30am after starting at 6.30am. Although one day we had 500km of transport before the stage and another 500km after it, which was draining.”

Despite riding most of the race with a 2cm thorn in his left arm, enduring an extremely uncomfortable dose of suspected food poisoning and losing 20 minutes on Stage 9, Sanders achieved his goal of wining the fourth stage and finishing seventh overall.

After all the drama and instances of sheer speed and potential, it’s perhaps the thorn in the arm that stood out for Sanders.

“The thorn was a funny one,” he said. “I slapped a tree on stage two and felt a pin prick and my muscles felt all funny when I went for the brake or throttle. I had the team doctor look at it after that stage and he couldn’t feel anything because it was in so deep. He was sure nothing was in my arm. The physio started mucking around with it and put a thumb on it and when I started moving my wrist around it started clicking and popping. The doctor did an ultrasound but was reluctant to take it out as it was so deep in the muscle, there was risk of infection. We decided to leave it in and perhaps that was the reason I got sick?

“By Stage 10 it started to come out and by Stage 12 it was hurting. I was riding along the dry lake beds that were all chattery and with the muscles slapping in my arm, I was screaming in my helmet. It was like being stabbed with a needle, even on the road sections. I had it removed after Stage 12 and I immediately felt so much better. I’ve got it in a jar and brought it home. It’s pretty cool actually.”

1. Thorn in my side: the little bugger that caused Sanders so much distress

2. And the relief was palpable when it was finally removed

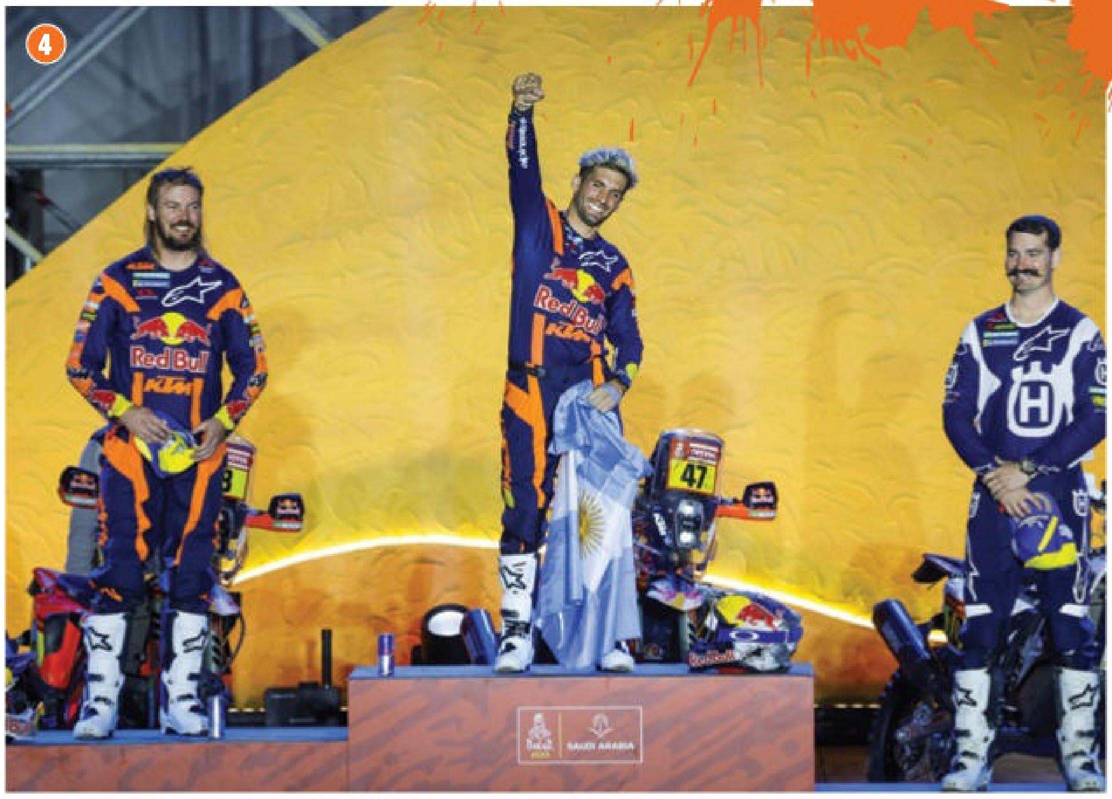
3. Do not plant this tyrant in your home or community garden!

4. The 2023 Dakar podium: (L to R) Price, Benavides and Howes

5. Sanders’ seventh place was a brilliant result considering his compromised prepartion and event woes

2023 Dakar Rally final standings

Kevin Benavides	KTM	44h27m20s
Toby Price	KTM	44h28m03s
Skyler Howes	Husqvarna	44h32m24s
Pablo Quintanilla	Honda	44h46m22s
Adrien Van Beveren	Honda	44h47m50s
Luciano Benavides	Husqvarna	44h50m02s
Daniel Sanders	GasGas	44h53m17s
Jose Ignacio Cornejo Florimo	Honda	45h18m41s
Lorenzo Santolino	Sherco	45h45m13s
Franco Caimi	Hero	46h05m24s



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AIROH COMMANDER HELMET

IN COMMAND

Airoh's latest two-in-one helmet could be just the ticket for those who chase both twisty tarmac and dusty trails

Fresh from the postman is my new Airoh Commander adventure helmet, and I can't wait to get it out on some trails. Airoh helmets are handmade in Italy and the attention to detail and finish are tremendous. The helmet has three sets of vents, an extra-wide visor for improved vision, and the built-in drop-down tinted visor is a great feature for adventure riding, especially when you get caught out in the dark when things don't go to plan.

The Commander is dubbed a multi-use 'on-off' helmet, so if you are armed with an allen key and five minutes you can remove the peak to turn it into an on-road helmet, or you can keep the peak on and remove the visor for a full off-road helmet to work with motocross goggles. I'll be giving the adventure and road specs a whirl in good time.

The Commander is available in a full carbon-fibre shell or what Airoh calls high-performance composite (HPC). The latter is about 60g heavier and tips the scales at approximately 1430g. The HPC version comes in a multitude of cool graphics as well as two plain colours in matt black and gloss white.

My choice of graphics is called Skill White Gloss and I think it looks pretty special.

The inner liners are removable and washable to keep the helmet as fresh as a daisy for years to come, and replacement cheekpads, liners and spare parts are available if you need them. It does up by the tried and trusted double D-ring system, which I'm pleased about, and in the box you will find a pinlock visor insert, a mounting kit to attach a GoPro or similar to the top of the helmet, and a chin curtain.

My first mission is to fit my Bluetooth headset to the Airoh – then it's time for some riding!

DAVID WATT

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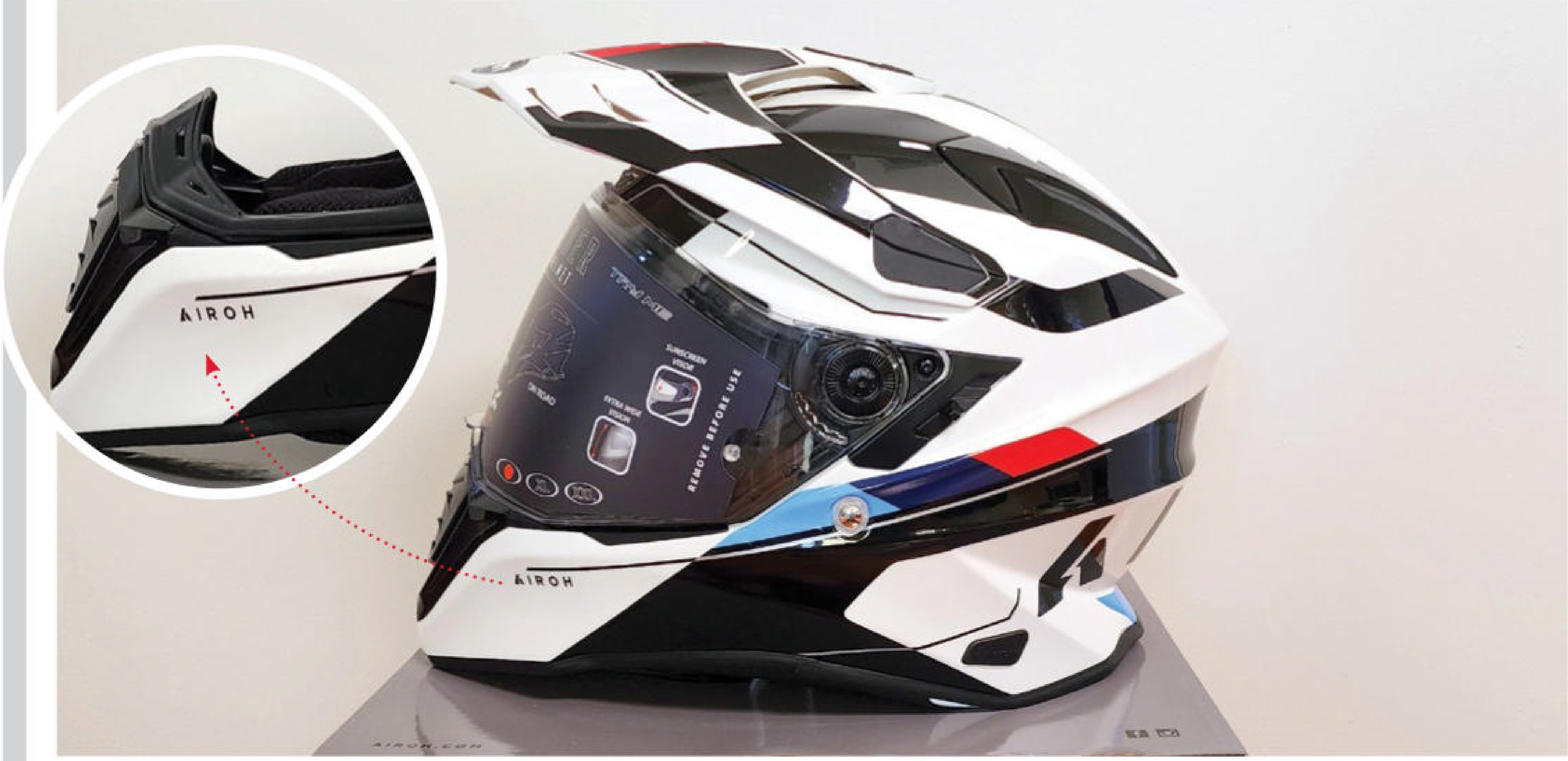

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① 2023 WORLDSBK, Rd1, LIVE

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24-26 FEBRUARY

Check website and local guides

Phillip Island returns to its traditional WorldSBK season-opening slot, with Alvaro Bautista starting his title defence and Aussie Remy Gardner joining the production-based series.

② 2023 ASBK, Rd1, LIVE

Fox Sports, SBS & livestream

24-26 FEBRUARY

Check website and local guides

The Phillip Island road racing smorgasbord from 24-26 February will also include the ASBK opener. Mike Jones has the number-one target on his back, with plenty of seasoned challengers ready to pounce.

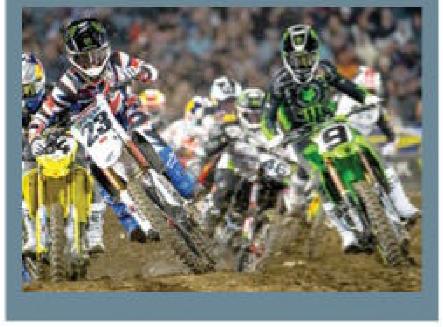
③ 2023 AMA SX, Rd7, LIVE

Fox Sports, Kayo & Video Pass

26 FEBRUARY

Check website and local guides

The top guns in the 450cc class are in an egalitarian mood: everyone's been getting a decent crack at circulating at or near the front of the pack. Will there be a standout in round seven as the series approaches halfway?



RACING WHERE & WHEN

ROAD RACING

2023 MOTOGP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd1	26 Mar, Portimao, PT
Rd2	2 Apr, Termas de Rio Hondo, AR
Rd3	16 Apr, Austin, US
Rd4	30 Apr, Jerez, ES
Rd5	14 May, Le Mans, FR
Rd6	11 Jun, Mugello, IT
Rd7	18 Jun, Sachsenring, DE
Rd8	25 Jun, Assen, NL
Rd9	9 Jul, Sokol, KZ
Rd10	6 Aug, Silverstone, GB
Rd11	20 Aug, Spielberg, AT
Rd12	3 Sep, Barcelona, ES
Rd13	10 Sep, Misano, IT
Rd14	24 Sep, Buddh, IN
Rd15	1 Oct, Motegi, JN
Rd16	15 Oct, Mandalika, ID
Rd17	22 Oct, Phillip Island, AU
Rd18	29 Oct, Buriram, TH
Rd19	12 Nov, Sepang, MY
Rd20	19 Nov, Losail, QA
Rd21	26 Nov, Valencia, ES

2023 AUSTRALIAN SUPERBIKE CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd1	24-26 Feb, Phillip Island, Vic
Rd2	24-25 Mar, Sydney Motorsport Park, NSW
Rd3	28-30 Apr, Queensland Raceway, Qld
Rd4	16-18 Jun, Hidden Valley, NT
Rd5	14-16 Jul, Morgan Park Raceway, Qld
Rd6	27-29 Oct, Phillip Island, Vic
Rd7	1-3 Dec, The Bend, SA

2023 SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd1	24-26 Feb, Phillip Island, AU
Rd2	3-5 Mar, Mandalika, IN
Rd3	21-23 Apr, Assen, NL
Rd4	5-7 May, Barcelona, ES
Rd5	2-4 Jun, Misano, IT
Rd6	30 Jun-2 Jul, Donington Park, GB
Rd7	28-20 Jul, Most, CZ
Rd8	8-10 Sep, Magny-Cours, FR
Rd9	22-24 Sep, Aragon, ES
Rd10	29-Sep-1 Oct, Portimao, PT
Rd11	13-15 Oct, San Juan, AR
Rd12	TBA

2023 BRITISH SUPERBIKE CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd1	8-9 Apr, Silverstone, NTH
Rd2	30 Apr-1 May, Oulton Park, CHS
Rd3	20-21 May, Donington Park, LCE
Rd4	17-18 Jun, Knockhill, FIF
Rd5	8-9 Jul, Snetterton, NFK
Rd6	22-23 Jul, Brands Hatch (GP), KEN
Rd7	12-13 Aug, Thruxton, HAM
Rd8	27-28 Aug, Cadwell Park, LIN
Rd9	16-17 Sep, Oulton Park, CHS
Rd10	30 Sep-1 Oct, Donington Park (GP), LCE
Rd11	14-15 Oct, Brands Hatch (GP), KEN

OFF-ROAD RACING

2023 AUSTRALIAN HARD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd1	1-2 Apr, 'Kosciuszki Killer', Vic
Rd2	13-14 May, 'Mother of Mayhem', Vic
Rd3	24-25 Jun, 'Ironstone Extreme', Qld
Rd4	12-13 Aug, 'Hillstorm Challenge', NSW
Rd5	7-8 Oct, 'Goldfields Extreme', Qld

2023 AUSTRALIAN OFF-ROAD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rds1/2	25-26 Mar, Mendooran, NSW
Rds3/4	22-23 Apr, Queensland Moto Park, Qld
Rds5/6	22-23 Jul, Edenhope, Vic
Rds7/8	26-27 Aug, TBA, SA
Rds9/10	16-17 Sep, Kyogle, NSW
Rds11/12	14-15 Oct, Dungog, Qld

2023 AUSTRALIAN JUNIOR MX CHAMPIONSHIP

11-16 Jul, Alice Springs, NT

2023 FINKE DESERT RACE

9-12 Jun, Alice Springs, NT

2023 HATTAH DESERT RACE

30 Jun-2 Jul, Hattah, Vic

2023 AUSTRALIAN JNR. DIRT TRACK CHAMPIONSHIP

15-16 Jul, Barleigh Ranch, NSW

2023 AUSTRALIAN SNR DIRT TRACK CHAMPIONSHIP

7-8 Oct, Diamond Park, Vic

2023 AUSTRALIAN JUNIOR TRACK CHAMPIONSHIP

15-16 Apr, Arundel, Qld

2023 AUSTRALIAN SENIOR TRACK CHAMPIONSHIP

28-29 Oct, Barleigh Ranch, NSW

2023 AUSTRALIAN FLAT TRACK NATIONALS

Rds1/2	1-2 Jul, Appin, NSW
Rds3/4	16-17 Sep, Brisbane, Qld
Rds5/6	11-12 Nov, Taree, NSW

2023 AMA SX

Rd7	26 Feb, Arlington, TX
Rd8	5 Mar, Daytona, FL
Rd9	12 Mar, Indianapolis, IN
Rd10	19 Mar, Detroit, MI
Rd11	26 Mar, Seattle, WA
Rd12	9 Apr, Glendale, AZ
Rd13	16 Apr, Atlanta, GA
Rd14	23 Apr, East Rutherford, NJ
Rd15	30 Apr, Nashville, TN
Rd16	7 May, Denver, CO
Rd17	14 May, Salt Lake City, UT

2023 WSX

Rd1	1 Jul, Birmingham, GB
Rd2	22 Jul, Lyon, FR
Rd3	30 Sep, TBA, SE Asia
Rd4	14 Oct, Dusseldorf, DE
Rd5	28 Oct, Vancouver, CA
Rd6	24-25 Nov, Melbourne, AU

2023 MOTOCROSS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd1	12 Mar, Villa La Angostura, AR
Rd2	26 Mar, Riola Sardo, Sardinia, IT
Rd3	8/10 Apr, Frauenfeld, CH
Rd4	16 Apr, Pietramurata, IT
Rd5	30 Apr, Agueda, PT
Rd6	7 May, Arroyomolinos, ES
Rd7	21 May, Villars sous Ecot, FR
Rd8	4 Jun, Kegums, LV
Rd9	11 Jun, Teutschenthal, DE
Rd10	25 Jun, Sumbawa, ID
Rd11	2 Jul, Lombok, ID
Rd12	16 Jul, Loket, CZ
Rd13	23 Jul, Lommel, BE
Rd14	30 Jul, Hyvinkaa, FI
Rd15	13 Aug, Uddevalla, SE
Rd16	20 Aug, Arnhem, NL
Rd17	3 Sep, Afyonkarahisar, TR
Rd18	17 Sep, Thanh Hoa, VN
Rd19	15 Oct, Matterley Basin, GB

2023 MOTOCROSS OF NATIONS

22 Oct, Ernee, FR

2023 JUNIOR MOTOCROSS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

9Jul, Bucharest, RO

2023 ENDUROGP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP*

Rd1	31 Mar-2 Apr: San Remo, IT
Rd2	5-7 May, Lalin, ES
Rd3	26-28 May, Heinola, FI
Rd4	1-3 Jun, Skövde, SE
Rd5	30 Jun-2 Jul, Gelnica, SK
Rd6	7-9 Jul, TBA
Rd7	29 Sep-1 Oct, Valpaços, PT
Rd8	6-8 Oct, St Andre, PT

2023 HARD ENDURO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd1	17-20 May, XCross, RS
Rd2	8-11 Jun, Erzbergrodeo, AT
Rd3	7-9 Jul, Abestone, IT
Rd4	25-29 Jul, Romaniacs, RO
Rd5	26-27 Aug, Outliers, CA
Rd6	28-20 Sep, Roof of Africa, LS
Rd7	3-4 Nov, GetZen Rodeo, DE

2023 SPEEDWAY GRAND PRIX

Rd1	29 Apr, Donji Kraljevec, HR
Rd2	13 May, Warsaw, PL
Rd3	3 Jun, Prague, CZ
Rd4	10 Jun, Teterow, DE
Rd5	24 Jun, Gorzow, PL
Rd6	23 July, Malilla, SE
Rd7	12 Aug, Riga, LV
Rd8	2 Sep, Cardiff, GB
Rd9	16 Sep, Vojens, DK
Rd10	30 Sep, Torun, PL

2023 TRIAL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd1	14-16 Apr, Arteixo, ES
Rd2	21-23 Apr, Gouveia, PT
Rd3	19-21 May, Motegi, JP
Rd4	09-11 Jun, Baldasserrona, SM
Rd5	16-18 Jun, Sant Julià de Lòria, AD
Rd6	21-23 Jul, Sestriere, IT
Rd7	01-03 Sep, Vertolaye, FR

2023 WOMEN'S TRIAL WORLD CHMPIONSHIP

Rd1	14-16 Apr, Arteixo ES
Rd2	21-23 Apr, Gouveia, PT
Rd3	19-21 May, Motegi, JP
Rd4	21-23 Jul, Sestriere, IT
Rd5	1-3 Sep, Vertolay, FR

2023 ICE SPEEDWAY WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Final	18-19 Mar, Inzell, DE
Final	1-2 Apr, Heerenveen, NL

RIDE DAYS & SCHOOLS

Phillip Island Ride Days / 0490 281 840
Phillip Island, Vic

Sydney Motorsport Park Ride Days/0490 281 840
SMSP, NSW

Murray Valley Training Co
0459 415 787
Barnawartha North, Vic

Champion's Ride Days
(07) 3287 4144
Broadford, Vic
Collie Motorplex, WA
Morgan Park, Qld
The Bend, SA

Trakdayz
0401 484 898
Barbagallo, WA

California Superbike School / 1300 793 423
Phillip Island, Vic
SMSP, NSW
Broadford, Vic
Morgan Park Qld

Mount Gambier MCC Coaching / Ride Days
0448 951 163
Mac Park, SA

Ride-Tek MTA
1300 788 382
Sandown, Vic

Ridedays WA
(08) 9409 1002
Barbagallo, WA
Collie, WA

Top Rider
1300 131 362
Various venues, Qld

Phoenix MCC Junior Coaching
0403 386 788
Tailem Bend, SA
Mallala, SA

RALLIES & SHOWS

3-5 MARCH 2023

BMW Earle's Fork Gathering, Olympic Highway, Henty, NSW. All Earle's Fork BMW owners across Australia, current and previous, along with all other BMW riders are invited to attend. Tired bikes on trailers very welcome. Bring any old pamphlets, pictures, trivia and stories to share. Will be based at the Headlie Taylor Header Museum. RSVP by 13 February. For more informatiuon,email hpj333@gmail.com, call 0457 034 488 or search 'BMW Earle's Fork Gathering 2023' on Facebook.

10-13 MARCH 2023

Open Roads Rally, Myrtleford, Vic. Off-road navigation-based rally plus activities, stalls, workshops, test rides and more. Ride in the navigational challenge, barrel race and other activities for participation and bonus points, with the more points the greater chance of winning. Event is open to anyone, all skills and ages, and for road and off-road riders. Training is also available from Miles Davis. For more info, including the schedule and to register, check out www.openroadsrally.com.

19-25 MARCH 2023

Variety Adventure Ride finishing in Lightning Ridge, NSW. Starting in Dubbo, exploring the amazing Gammon and Flinders Ranges, seeing the harsh elements of the Strzelecki Desert, visiting the iconic Cameron Corner and finishing in Lightning Ridge. The route will be following remote tracks and chasing beautiful outback sunsets. The event is not a race: it is an adventure exploring remote parts of our beautiful country. Information at www.variety.org.au/nsw/event/varietyadventureride/

25 MARCH-1 APRIL 2023

APC Rally, eight days, with the course a massive loop of the best riding in Australia. Riders are to make their way to one of five starting points. The course is approximately 3500km in length. The rally is designed so riders can take easy options around more technical sections if they have a large touring bike, or if they simply don't have the confidence to tackle them. Riders are supplied with comprehensive track notes. All riders need is a functioning GPS or phone app. Information at apcrally.net.

16 APRIL 2023

Mirboo North Motorcycle Swap Meet Castle Street Oval, Mirboo North (Vic). No car parts, bric-a-brac or household stuff. Coffee and barbecue on site, and entry is $10 per person. Gates open at 6:30am for setup. For more information on the bi-annual event, tel 0428 684 267, look up 'mirboo north motorcycle show' on Facebook or email mirboo.n.motorcycle.show@outlook.com.

6 MAY 2023

Dubbo Motorbike Rally Dubbo, NSW. From Harleys to Hondas, Buells to Beemers and Piaggios to posties – all bikes and riders are welcome. The event will be held in Talbragar Street from 9am to 4pm (you can park in 'Bike Street' any time, for as long as you like, during this period). Just don't leave your ride at the motel, as everyone else wants to see it too! There will be stalls, entertainment, local rides and much more. For more information see the event website at dubbomotorbikerally.com.

20-21 MAY 2023

Great Southern Adventure Rally, location TBA, SA (north of Adelaide). Start at 10.30am; stands up at 11.30am. An adventure event focused on fun and teamwork. Anyone on a street-legal bike over 150cc can join in on the action. Teams of at least two, but you are welcome to join up with any other teams on the day. Riding gear for light to medium off-road, appropriate tyres, camping can be arranged, one Twitter account required per team, bring water. For details and registration visit www.greatsouthernadventurerally.com.au.

27-28 MAY 2023

Historic Winton, Winton, Vic. The 46th car and motorcycle event will be held in its usual spectacular style with races, displays, trade stalls, a Sunday parade and delicious food. Discounted event and camping tickets are available at www.ticketebo.com.au/historicwinton. For the latest Historic Winton news, visit www.historicwinton.org or follow on Facebook or Instagram @historicwinton.

7-11 JUNE 2023

Bike Fest Oz in Coolangatta and surrounds is shaping up to be Australia's version of Sturgis or Daytona Bike Week. Events include the Rolling Thunder Parade, poker run, beach rides, opening ball and a concert and party which will signal the end of the five-day event. Early-bird packages are available for $500 and get you into the Thunder Parade, guaranteed access to the accomodation packages and other limited ticketed events, a tourist info pack, a t-shirt and a bumper sticker. For more information check out bikefestoz.com.au.

11 JUNE 2023

Border Swap Meet, Tweed Heads, NSW. To be held at Recreation Street Park in Florence Street. Gates open for vendors at 5am. For details shoot an email through to contactsecretary.thmcec@gmail.com or call the club on 0404 222 422.

26-28 AUGUST 2023

TTT Rally, follow red and white TTT signs 10km north of Taralga, NSW. An overnight ride, with camping and a huge bonfire. BYO everything else. Badge $25 on the day. The TTT Rally (the TTT part an acronym for 'Thrashers Terrifying Treck') is a favourite of the Clubman Tourers. If you're interested in taking part, vsit www.clubman.org.au.

8-10 SEPTEMBER 2023

Ragged Fringe Rally, Bretti Reserve, NSW. Annual rally for the Moto Guzzi Club NSW. Firewood will be provided by the club and rally badges and T-shirts will be available for purchase. Entry fee is $30. The rally officially starts on Saturday morning however many choose to arrive on the Friday. There will be a number of meeting points for group rides to the rally on either day. For more information, visit www.mgoa.org.

19 SEPTEMBER 2023

31st Annual Border Poker Run Tweed Heads, NSW. All makes and models welcome. Make sure you keep an eye on the 'Tweed Heads Motorcycle Enthusiasts Club' Facebook page as more information comes to hand.

3-9 NOVEMBER 2023

BSA Motorcycle International Rally in Harndorf, South Australia. Six days of good company, great riding with panoramic views of South Aussie's beautiful countryside, as well as superb local produce included in all meals. These rallies are set up for maximum fun, as a way to get together like-minded people who have an interest in firing up their British motorcycles and getting them out for a run, and also to catch up with old and new friends in a relaxed atmosphere. For more information check out the website at www.bsainternationalrally2023.com/

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7.6 LITRES
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2

06 THINGS YOU NEED

① TIDY REAR

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R&G's Yamaha R7 Tail Tidy is designed to replace the large, standard plastic numberplate holder on the Yamaha R7. The Tail Tidy features a laser-cut stainless steel construction and a built-in numberplate light, and comes with all holes pre-drilled and the fixtures and fittings supplied.

② FULL BLADDER

Whites Powersports

From $169

☎ (03) 8720 6000

whitesmoto.com.au

Giant Loop Utility Bladders are a flexible, collapsible and lightweight way to transport and store automotive fluids. Utility Bladders feature a TPU and Cordura construction, a pour spout with storage pocket, and integrated daisy chain webbing for easy fastening. They are available in 3.8L, 7.6L, 11.4L and 18.9L sizes.

③ GAS BAGGERS

Cassons Australia

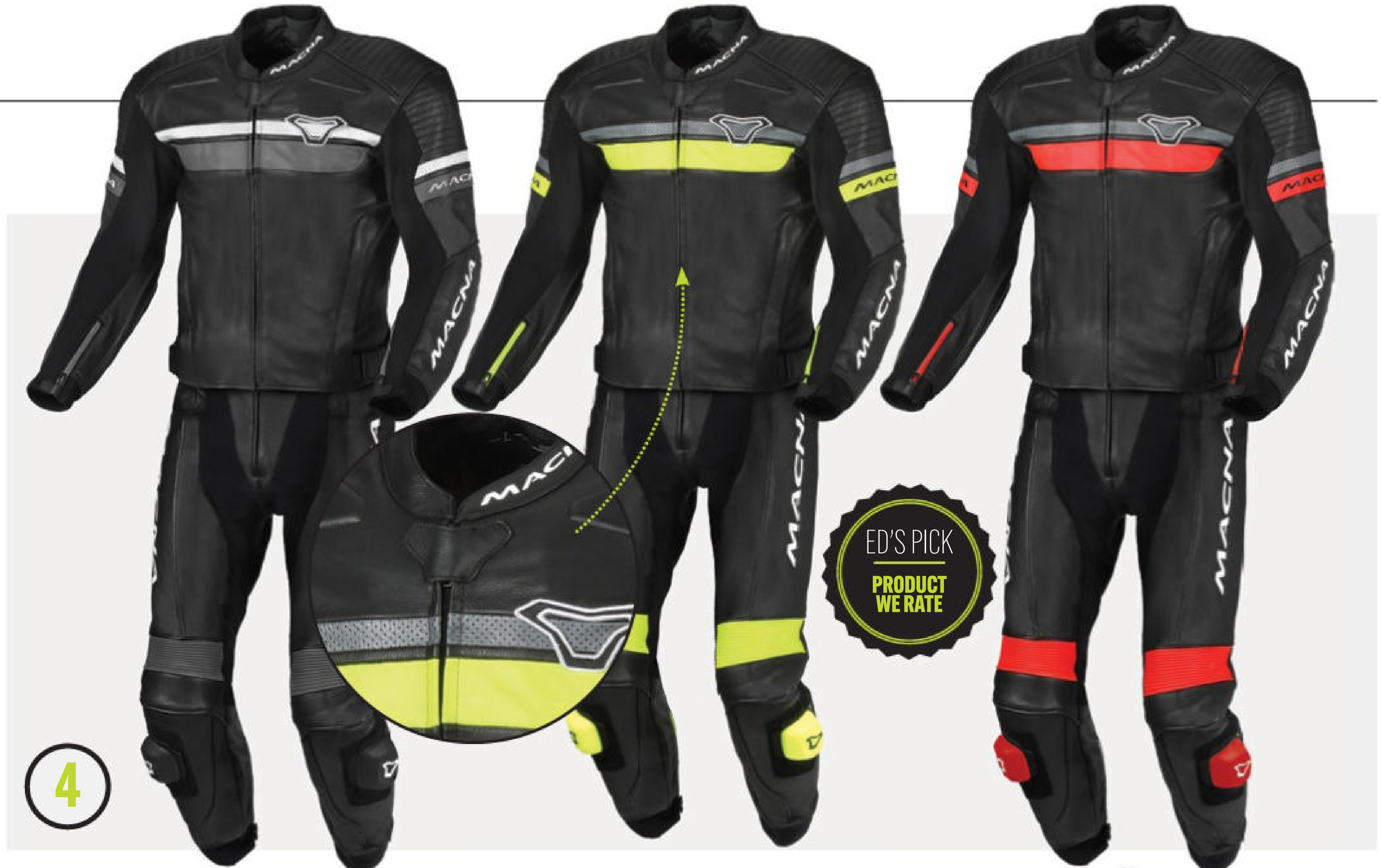
From $2795.95

☎ (02) 8882 1900

cassonsmedia.com

The Vance & Hines Hi-Output RR 2-1 system is constructed using 304 stainless steel, with hand-welded stepped headers and a chambered high-flow catalyst integrated in the muffler for improved torque. The RR is available in brushed or matte black finishes to suit Harley-Davidson Milwaukee-Eight touring models.

3
VANCE & HINES



④ SUIT YOURSELF

Link International

$999.95

☎ (07) 3382 5000

macnaridinggear.com.au

Macna's Diabro two-piece suit boasts an embossed cow leather construction with mesh comfort liner and utilises 'dynamic stretch' panels for increased range of movement and comfort. The Diabro also features CE level 1 shoulder, elbow, knee and hip protection, and is chest and back protector ready.

⑤ MISTY FOR ME

Moto National

$299.95

☎ 1300 885 355

falcoboots.com.au

The Falco Misty women's boot features a full-grain leather upper construction with water-resistant membrane and reinforcement in the heel, toe and ankle areas. Misty also features a combined lace and zipper closure and a rubber sole with raised heel. It's available in black or army colours in sizes 36-41.

⑥ ROAM FREE

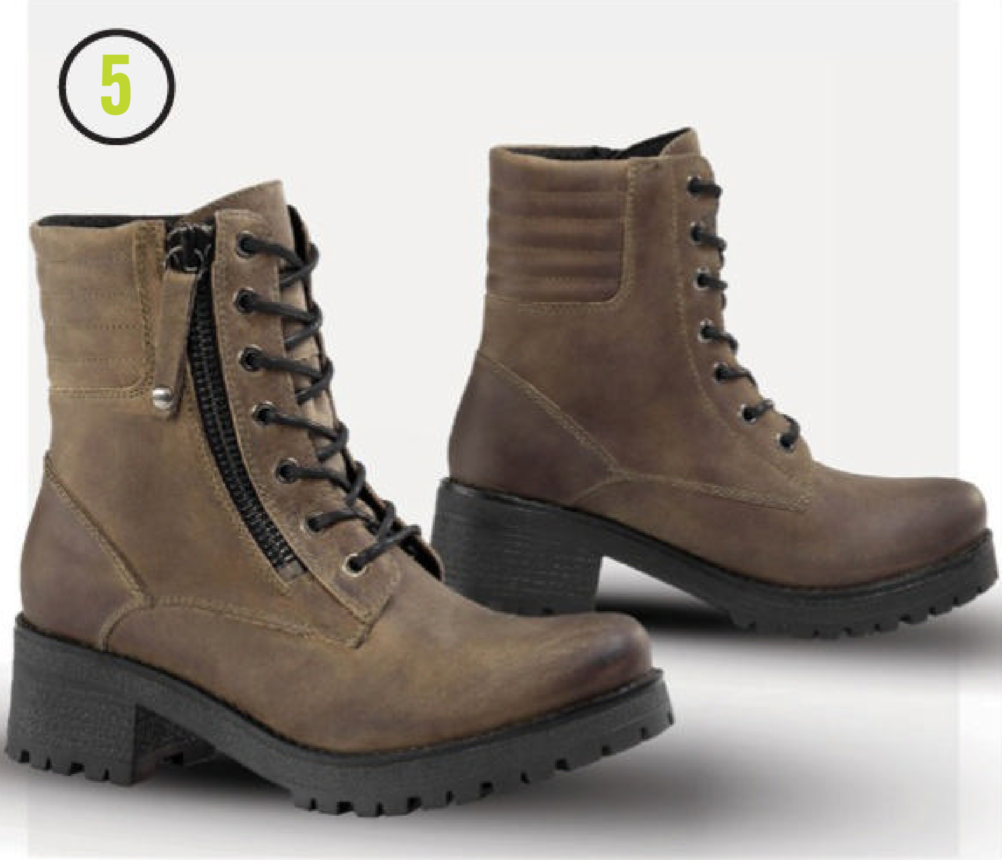
Kriega Australia

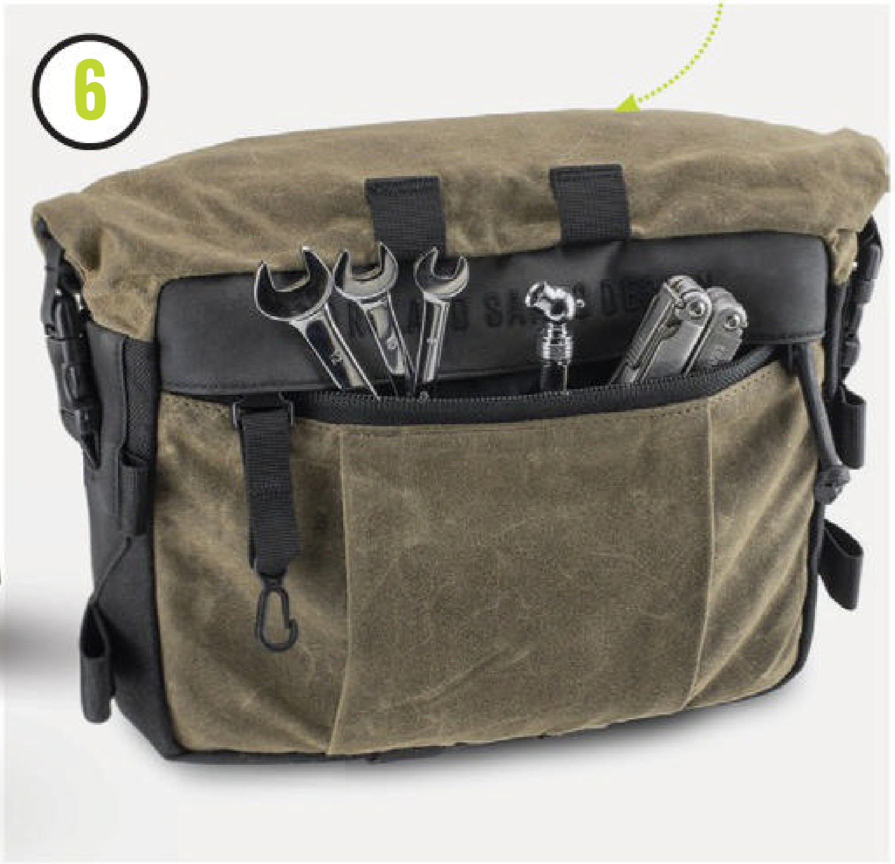
From $169

☎ 0409 959 737

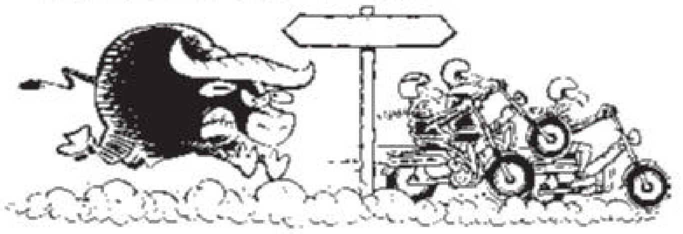
kriega.com.au

The Kriega Roam 'RSD' handlebar bag features a fully waterproof wax cotton main compartment with roll top, as well as a rear Molle panel and Velcro wrap straps for easy attachment. The Roam also has a quick access zipped pocket with dividers and a removable smartphone pocket with a touch sensitive cover.





Postie Bike CHALLENGE



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2-13 Sep 2023

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www.postiebikechallenge.org Ph. 0411 090 891

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BUYER'S GUIDE. A-Z OF NEW BIKE PRICES

APRILIA
aprilia.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
SR GT 125	$7440	✓
SR GT 125 Sport	$7540	✓
RS 660	$21,230	✓
RS 660 LAMS	$20,830	✓
Tuono 660	$20,430	×
Tuono 660 LAMS	$20,530	✓
Tuareg 660	$22,230	×
Tuareg 660 LAMS	$22,230	✓
Tuono V4	$28,830	×
Tuono Factory	$33,330	×
RSV4	$31,830	×
RSV4 Factory	$38,930	×

BENELLI
benelli.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
TnT 135 CBS	$4590	✓
TRK 502	$9990	✓
TRK 502X	$10,690	✓
Leoncino 500	$9890	✓
Leoncino 500 Trail	$10,390	✓
Leoncino 800	$13,490	×
Leoncino 800 Trail	$13,990	×
502C	$10,590	✓
752S	$12,990	×
TNT 600i	$11,790	✓

BETA
betamotor.com.au

Plus on-road costs

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
RR 125 2T	$12,295	✓
RR 200 2T	$13,395	✓
RR 250 2T	$13,595	✓
RR 300 2T	$14,395	✓
RR 350 4T EFI	$14,195	✓
RR 390 4T EFI	$14,495	✓
RR 430 4T EFI	$14,695	✓
RR 480 4T EFI	$14,995	✓
X-Trainer 250 2T	$11,195	✓
X-Trainer 300 2T	$11,495	✓

BMW
bmwmotorrad.com.au

Plus on-road costs (from August 2022 production)

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
F 900 XR	$18,480	×
F 900 R	$15,320	×
S 1000 XR	$28,980	×
M 1000 RR	$52,490	×
S 1000 RR (Jan 2023 production)	$25,750	×
R 1250 RS	$27,220	×
R 1250 RT	$36,840	×
K 1600 GT	$41,690	×
K 1600 GTL	$43,390	×
K 1600 B	$41,690	×
K 1600 Grand America	$44,290	×
G 310 R	$7600	✓
F 900 R	$15,230	×
S 1000 R	$21,290	×
M 1000 R (Jan 2023 production)	$32,290	×
R 1250 R	$25,820	×
R 18	$22,700	×
R 18 Classic	$25,400	×
R 18 B Deluxe	$35,400	×
R 18 Transcontinental	$37,500	×
R nineT	$24,690	×
R nineT Pure	$21,390	×
R nineT Scrambler	$20,610	×
R nineT Urban G/S	$20,465	×
G 310 GS	$7990	✓
F 750 GS	$17,755	×
F 850 GS	$21,240	×
F 850 GS Adventure	$23,640	×
R 1250 GS	$30,320	×
R 1250 GS Adventure	$32,305	×
C 400 GT	$11,140	✓
C 400 X	$9890	✓
CE 04	$21,100	✓

BRP
au.brp.com

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
Ryker 600	$15,199	✓
Ryker 900	$17,749	×
Ryker Rally 900	$19,799	×
Spyder F3 S	$31,149	×
Spyder F3 LTD	$35,699	×
Spyder RT LTD	$41,449	×

CFMOTO
cfmoto.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
150NK	$4290	✓
300NK	$5490	✓
300SR	$6290	✓
650MT	$8290	✓
650GT	$8490	✓
650NK	$8290	✓
700CL-X Heritage	$9490	×
700CL-X Sport	$10,490	×
800MT Sport	$12,990	×
800MT Touring	$14,490	×

DUCATI
ducati.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
Multistrada V4	$30,800	×
Multistrada V4 S	$35,000	×
Multistrada V4 S Sport	$42,900	×
Multistrada V4 Pikes Peak	$45,000	×
Multistrada V2	$23,200	×
Multistrada V2 S	$25,700	×
DesertX	$24,700	×
Hypermotard 950	$23,100	×
Hypermotard 950 RVE	$24,700	×
Hypermotard 950 SP	$28,900	×
Streetfighter V2	$23,200	×
Streetfighter V4	$32,400	×
Streetfighter V4 S	$37,000	×
Streetfighter V4 SP	$48,400	×
Monster	$19,200	×
Monster+	$19,800	×
Monster 659	$13,500	✓
Supersport	$20,900	×
Supersport S	$23,200	×
Scrambler Urban Motard	$18,900	×
Scrambler Icon	$15,600	×
Scrambler Icon Dark	$14,900	×
Scrambler Desert Sled	$20,000	×
Scrambler Nightshift	$18,300	×
Scrambler 1100 Dark PRO	$19,100	×
Scrambler 1100 PRO	$20,390	×
Scrambler 1100 Tribute Pro	$21,300	×
Scrambler 1100 Sport PRO	$24,200	×
Panigale V4	$34,700	×
Panigale V4 S	$43,900	×
Panigale V4 SP2	$56,900	×
Panigale V2	$24,900	×
Diavel 1260	$32,800	×
Diavel 1260 S	$38,400	×
Diavel V4	$41,100	×
XDiavel Dark	$31,800	×
XDiavel S	$38,900	×
XDiavel Nera	$44,900	×

ENERGICA
australianelectricmotorco.com/energica-motorcycles

Plus on-road costs

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
Experia	$48,164	×
Ego	$41,725	×
Ego+	$52,233	×
Ego+ RS	$55,329	×
Ribelle	$50,374	×
Ribelle RS	$52,470	×
Esseesse9	$35,478	×
Esseesse9+	$46,563	×

GASGAS
gasgasaustralia.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
EC 250	$15,599	✓
EC 250F	$15,599	✓
EC 300	$17,069	✓
EC 350F	$16,659	✓
SM 700	$19,105	✓
ES 700	$19,105	✓

H-D
harley-davidson.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
Softail Standard	$22,995	×
Nightster	$23,995	×
Street Bob 114	$26,250	×
Sport Glide	$29,750	×
Low Rider S	$30,750	×
Low Rider ST	$35,250	×
Fat Bob 114	$31,750	×
Heritage Classic 114	$36,250	×
Fat Boy 114	$36,250	×
Breakout 114	$36,250	×
Road King Special	$39,495	×
Road Glide Special	$41,995	×
Road Glide ST	$44,995	×
Sportster S	$26,495	×
Street Glide Special	$41,995	×
Street Glide ST	$44,995	×
Ultra Limited	$43,995	×
Freewheeler	$49,250	×
Tri Glide Ultra	$59,250	×
CVO Street Glide	$58,250	×
CVO Road Glide	$58,750	×
CVO Limited	$61,750	×
CVO Tri Glide	$76,250	×
Pan America 1250S	$33,495	×

HONDA
hondamotorcycles.com.au

Plus on-road costs

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
GL1800 Goldwing DCT	$41,999	×
GL1800 Goldwing Tour Prem DCT	$49,999	×
NT1100	$21,690	×
NT1100D DCT	$22,699	×
CBR1000RR-R SP	$52,999	×
CBR650R	$12,099	✓

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MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
CBR600RR	$27,599	✗
CBR500R	$9999	✓
CB125E	$2869	✓
Grom	$4249	✓
Monkey	$6649	✓
CB500F	$9499	✓
CB650R	$11,499	✓
CB300R	$7199	✓
CMX1100 DCT	$19,649	✗
CMX1100	$18,549	✗
CMX500	$9149	✓
NSS350A Forza	$9549	✓
ADV150	$6149	✓
PCX150	$5299	✓
C125 Super Cub	$7378	✓
CT125	$7449	✓
NSC110 Dio	$3349	✓
MW110 Benly	$3999	✓
CRF1100 Africa Twin	$22,999	✗
CRF1100 Africa Twin AS	$26,199	✗
CRF1100 Africa Twin AS DCT	$27,199	✗
CRF1100 Africa Twin AS DCT ES	$29,499	✗
CRF300LRA Rally	$9199	✓
CB500XA	$9949	✓

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
CRF300LA	$7999	✓
AG-XR	$5399	✓
HUSQVARNA husqvarnamotorcycles.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
Vitpilen 401	$7975	✓
Svartpilen 401	$7975	✓
FS450	$16,625	✓
701 Supermoto	$19,490	✗
701 Enduro	$19,490	✗
2022 TE 150i	$14,735	✓
2023 TE 150i	$14,959	✓
2022 TE 250i	$16,520	✓
2023 TE 250i	$16,789	✓
2022 TE 300i	$18,025	✓
2023 TE 300i	$18,379	✓
2022 FE 250	$16,520	✓
2023 FE 250	$16,789	✓
2022 FE 350	$17,610	✓
2023 FE 350	$17,929	✓
2022 FE 450	$18,025	✓
2023 FE 450	$18,269	✓
2022 FE 501	$18,655	✓
2023 FE 501	$18,929	✓
Norden 901	$25,050	✗

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
INDIAN indianmotorcycle.com.au		
All Indian prices are ride away		
Scout Bobber	$21,995	✗
Scout Bobber Twenty	$23,495	✗
Scout	$22,995	✗
Scout Rogue	$23,995	✗
Chief Dark Horse	$26,995	✗
Chief Bobber Dark Horse	$28,495	✗
Super Chief Limited	$30,995	✗
Springfield Dark Horse	$36,995	✗
Springfield	$37,495	✗
Chieftain Dark Horse	$40,495	✗
Chieftain Limited	$40,995	✗
Challenger Dark Horse	$41,495	✗
Challenger Limited	$41,995	✗
Roadmaster Dark Horse	$43,495	✗
Roadmaster Limited	$43,995	✗
Roadmaster	$44,995	✗
Pursuit Dark Horse	$44,995	✗
Pursuit Limited	$45,495	✗
FTR	$19,995	✗
FTR S	$22,995	✗
FTR R Carbon	$25,995	✗

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
KAWASAKI kawasaki.com.au		
Plus on-road costs		
Versys-X 300 SE	$7578	✓
Ninja 400 SE	$7713	✓
Ninja 400	$7413	✓
Z400	$7263	✓
Ninja 650L	$11,378	✓
Ninja 650	$11,378	✗
Versys 650L	$12,178	✓
Z650L	$11,278	✓
Z650RS	$12,078	✓
W800 Cafe	$14,298	✗
W800 Street	$13,898	✗
Z900 Supernaked	$13,528	✗
Z900RS	$16,778	✗
Ninja 1000SX	$17,878	✗
Versys 1000 S	$20,978	✗
Z1000	$16,978	✗
Ninja ZX-6R (636) KRT	$16,178	✗
Ninja H2	$38,379	✗
Ninja H2R	$67,299	✗
Ninja H2 SX	$32,379	✗
Ninja ZX-10R	$26,879	✗

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VOL 72
NO 11

BIKE SPOTLIGHT

KTM
RC390

ENGINE	373cc single
POWER	32kW (44hp)
TORQUE	37Nm
WEIGHT	155kg (dry)
PRICE	$8399 (ride away)

> "It offers fantastic and useable performance, razor-sharp handling, super-strong braking and great ergonomics"

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MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
Ninja ZX-10RR	$42,379	✗
ZH2	$24,140	✗
Ninja ZX-14R	$22,559	✗
Ninja ZX-14R SE	$23,239	✗
Vulcan S	$10,259	✗
Vulcan S LAMS	$10,439	✓
Kawasaki KLX150BF SE	$4629	✓
Kawasaki KLX230	$6329	✓
KLX230SM	$7494	✓
KLX250	$7294	✓
KLX450R	$11,329	✓
KLR650 ABS	$9394	✓
KLR650 ABS Adventure	$10,394	✓
KTM ktm.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
200 Duke ABS	$5470	✓
390 Duke	$7885	✓
890 Duke	$16,850	✗
890 Duke GP	$17,120	✗
890 Duke R	$19,840	✗
690 SMC R	$19,295	✗
RC 390	$8399	✓
1290 Super Duke R	$29,420	✗
1290 Super Duke R EVO	$32,115	✗
1290 Super Duke GT	$33,165	✗
690 Enduro R	$19,295	✗
390 Adventure	$9970	✓
890 Adventure	$23,400	✗
890 Adventure R	$25,380	✗
1290 Super Adventure S	$31,710	✗
1290 Super Adventure R	$33,265	
2022 150 EXC	$14,175	✓
2023 150 EXC	$14,599	✓
2022 250 EXC	$15,900	✓
2023 250 EXC	$16,399	✓
2022 250 EXC-F	$15,900	✓
2023 250 EXC-F	$16,399	✓
2022 300 EXC TPI	$17,400	✓
2023 300 EXC TPI	$17,879	✓
2022 350 EXC-F	$16,985	✓
2023 350 EXC-F	$17,449	✓
2022 450 EXC-F	$17,300	✓
2023 450 EXC-F	$17,799	✓
2022 500 EXC-F	$17,925	✓
2023 500 EXC-F	$18,419	✓
KYMCO kymco.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
Agility 50	$2490	✓
Like 50 4T	$2890	✓
Agility RS 125 CBS	$2990	✓
Agility 16+ 125 (w/ top box)	$3490	✓
Agility 16+ 200i (w/ top box)	$4190	✓
People S 150 (w/ top box)	$5190	✓
Super 8 50 2T	$2790	✓
Like 125 CBS (w/ top box)	$3990	✓
Like 200i (w/ top box)	$3990	✓
Like 150R ABS (w/ top box)	$5290	✓
Like 150S	$4790	✓
Agility 16+ 300	$6990	✓
Downtown 350i ABS	$8290	✓
DTX360	$8790	✓
Xciting S 400i ABS	$9990	✓
AK550 ABS	$13,490	✓
LAMBRETTA lambrettaaustralia.com.au		
V50 Special Flex	$3590	✓
V200 Special Flex	$4990	✓
MOTO GUZZI motoguzzi.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
V7 Stone	$18,030	✗
V7 Stone Centenario	$19,030	✗
V7 Special	$18,930	✗
V9 Bobber Centenario	$19,330	✗
V85 TT	$22,230	✗
V85 TT Evocative	$22,830	✗
V85 TT Travel	$24,330	✗
V85 TT Centenario	$22,830	✗
MV AGUSTA mvagusta.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
F3 800 Rosso	$36,990	✗
F3 800 RR	$41,990	✗
Brutale 800 Rosso	$29,990	✗
Brutale 800 RR	$34,990	✗
Brutale 1000 RS	$51,990	✗
Brutale 1000 RR	$63,990	✗
Rush 1000 (+race kit)	$76,880	✗
Dragster 800 Rosso	$32,990	✗
Dragster 800 RR SCS	$37,990	✗
Dragster 800 RC SCS	$41,990	✗
Superveloce 800	$42,990	✗
Superveloce 800 S	$48,990	✗
Superveloce 800 S (+race kit)	$51,590	✗
Turismo Veloce Rosso	$33,990	✗
Turismo Veloce Lusso SCS	$43,990	✗
PEUGEOT peugeotmotorcycles.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
Kisbee 50 2T	$2990	✓
Tweet 200	$5790	✓
Tweet 200 GT	$5990	✓
Django 50	$4190	✓
Django 150	$5490	✓
Belville 200 RS	$5990	✓
Metropolis 400	$14,790	✓
PIAGGIO piaggio.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
Typhoon 50	$4140	✓
Medley	$6540	✓
Medley S	$6640	✓
Beverly 400 S	$12,440	✓
RIEJU rieju.com.au		
Plus on-road costs		
MR Ranger 200	$12,790	✓
MR Ranger 300	$12,990	✓
MR Racing 250	$13,990	✓
MR Racing 300	$14,290	✓
MR Pro 250	$15,690	✓
MR Pro 300	$15,990	✓
ROYAL ENFIELD royalenfield.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
Meteor 350 Fireball	$7890	✓
Meteor 350 Stellar	$8290	✓
Meteor 350 Supernova	$8690	✓
Hunter 350 Dapper	$7590	✓
Hunter 350 Rebel	$7690	✓
Classic 350 Halcyon	$7990	✓
Classic 350 Signals	$8290	✓
Classic 350 Dark	$8690	✓
Classic 350 Chrome	$8790	✓
Scram 411 Base	$8240	✓
Scram 411 Mid	$8340	✓
Scram 411 Premium	$8440	✓
Interceptor 650 Classic	$10,990	✓
Interceptor 650 Custom	$11,290	✓
Interceptor 650 Chrome	$11,590	✓
Continental GT 650 Classic	$10,990	✓
Continental GT 650 Custom	$11,290	✓
Continental GT 650 Chrome	$11,590	✓
Himalayan 410	$8390	✓
Super Meteor 650 Astra Black-Blue	$11,990	✓
Super Meteor 650 Interstellar Green	$12,190	✓
Super Meteor 650 Celestial Blue-Red	$11,290	✓
SHERCO Sherco.com		
Plus on-road costs		
125 SE Factory	$13,499	✓
250 SE Factory	$14,999	✓
300 SE Factory	$15,499	✓
250 SEF Factory	$15,499	✓
300 SEF Factory	$15,999	✓
450 SEF Factory	$16,799	✓
500 SEF Factory	$16,999	✓
SUZUKI suzukimotorcycles.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
Address 110	$3890	✓
Avenis 125	$4890	✓
GSX-S125A	$5440	✓
V-Strom 250SX	$6480	✓
V-Strom 650XT	$14,990	✗
V-Strom 650XT LAMS	$14,990	✓
SV650	$11,490	✗
SV650 LAMS	$11,490	✓
GSX-S750	$14,390	✗
2023 GSX-R1000	$24,990	✗
2023 GSX-R1000R	$27,990	✗
GSX-S1000	$17,990	✗
GSX-S1000GT	$19,990	✗
Katana	$21,990	✗
V-Strom 1050XT	$21,990	✗
Hayabusa	$27,790	✗
Boulevard M109R	$21,990	✗
Trojan	$5990	✓
DR-Z400E	$11,390	✓
DR650SE	$10,390	✓
SUPER SOCO supersoco.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
TC - Cafe	$5490	✓
TC Max (alloy wheels)	$7990	✓
TC Max (wire-spoke wheels)	$8290	✓
CUX Scooter	$4990	✓
CUX Scooter - Ducati	$5490	✓
CPx Scooter	$7690	✓
CPx Scooter Dual Battery	$9990	✓
SWM swmmotorcycles.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
RS300R	$8590	✓

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MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
RS500R	$9290	✓
SYM SCOOTA	symscooters.com.au	
Crox 50	$2490	✓
Mio 50i	$2890	✓
Classic 125	$2790	✓
Orbit 125	$2790	✓
Orbit II 125i	$3190	✓
Symphony ST200i	$3990	✓
Classic 200i	$4090	✓
HD300i	$6690	✓
GTS300i Sport	$7690	✓
TRIUMPH	triumphmotorcycles.com.au	
All prices are ride away		
Speed Twin 900	$16,190	✗
Bonneville T100	$18,290	✗
Scrambler 900	$18,590	✗
Bonneville T120	$20,890	✗
Speed Twin 1200	$21,090	✗
Thruxton RS	$25,990	✗
Bonneville Speedmaster	$22,490	✗
Bonneville Bobber	$22,490	✗
Scrambler 1200 XC	$23,450	✗
Scrambler 1200 XE	$24,890	✗
Rocket 3 R	$34,450	✗
Rocket 3 GT	$35,850	✗
Trident 660 LAMS	$13,150	✓
Street Triple S 660	$14,990	✓
Street Triple R (and Low)	$18,140	✗
Speed Triple RR	$32,490	✗
Street Triple RS	$19,950	✗
Speed Triple 1200 RS	$28,490	✗
Tiger 850 Sport	$18,250	✗
Tiger 900 GT (and Low)	$21,250	✗
Tiger 900 GT Pro	$24,250	✗
Tiger 900 Rally	$22,390	✗
Tiger 900 Rally Pro	$24,890	✗
Tiger 1200 GT Pro	$29,990	✗
Tiger 1200 Rally Pro	$31,800	✗
Tiger 1200 GT Explorer	$32,600	✗
Tiger 1200 Rally Explorer	$33,950	✗
URAL	ural.com	
CT	$25,299	✗
Gear Up	$28,599	✗
Sportsman SE	$30,599	✗
Sahara SE	$30,599	✗
VESPA	vespa.com.au	
All prices are ride away		
Primavera 50	$6490	✓
Primavera 125 i-Get	$7690	✓
Primavera 150 i-Get	$8490	✓
Primavera 150 S	$8590	✓
Primavera 150 Red	$8990	✓
Primavera 150 SE Picnic	$9040	✓
Primavera 150 75 Anno	$9890	✓
Sprint i-Get	$8590	✓
GTS 150 i-Get	$9590	✓
GTS 300 Super Sport	$12,290	✓
GTS 300 Super Tech	$12,890	✓
GTV 300 ‘Sei Giorni’	$12,590	✓
GTS 300 75 Anno	$13,590	✓
YAMAHA	yamaha-motor.com.au	
All prices are ride away		
D’elight 125 White	$3849	✓
NMAX 155	$5899	✓
XMAX 300	$9149	✓
TMAX 560	$19,849	✓
XV250 Virago	$8849	✓
YZF-R15	$4999	✓
MT-03	$7849	✓
YZF-R3	$8199	✓
MT-07 LAMS	$12,749	✓
MT-07 HO	$13,599	✗
XSR700	$13,699	✓
MT-09	$15,699	✗
MT-09 SP	$18,099	✗
XSR900	$17,299	✗
Tracer 9 GT	$23,999	✗
Niken GT	$28,199	✗
MT-10	$23,649	✗
MT-10 SP	$27,349	✗
FJR1300	$32,649	✗
YZF-R6 (Race only)	$19,049	✗
YZF-R7 LAMS	$14,049	✓
YZF-R7 HO	$15,049	✗
YZF-R1	$28,199	✗
YZF-R1M	$37,099	✗
WR250F	$14,949	✓
WR450F	$16,549	✓
Tenere 700	$19,399	✗
Super Tenere	$25,949	✗

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BIKE SPOTLIGHT

SUZUKI
GSX-S1000GT

ENGINE	999cc inline four-cylinder
POWER	112kW (152hp)
TORQUE	106Nm
WEIGHT	226kg (wet)
PRICE	$19,090 (ride away)

> “The GSX-S1000GT meets its design brief pretty well, and the ergonomics are a perfect mix of sport and touring”

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> “THE MOTORCYCLE INDUSTRY IS SLOWLY FINDING... STRATEGIES TO GET THESE PEOPLE ONTO MOTORCYCLES”

AH, THE internet can be such a cruel world. Recently a mate sent me some keyboard bumpf explaining why Generation X is only buying a few motorcycles, and the Millennials pretty much none. There was a list of reasons for this, which must be a worrying trend for anyone involved in motorcycling, whether it’s making, selling or buying them.

These ranged from younger generations of potential buyers being: Unable to get their phone to their ear with a helmet on (they obviously haven’t yet heard of Aussie start-up Forcite helmets); the handlebar has buttons and levers so can’t be controlled by a touch screen; they have to change gears manually and use some strange device called a clutch; or it’s too dangerous to take selfies while riding... and so it went on.

Perhaps the cruellest comments were: They don’t get a trophy and recognition plaque just for buying a motorcycle; or they can’t afford one because they spent a decade at university trying to get a degree in humanities, architecture or similar, for which no jobs are available.

All jokes aside, the ageing motorcycle demographic is a worldwide problem, at least in countries like Australia. It certainly isn’t such an issue in markets like India, Asia and the Americas (by which I mean Latin America, Brazil and Argentina) where 30-year-plus people are transitioning from tiny commuter motorcycles and mopeds to full-sized 300cc and similar models.

These people most often live in crowded cities, where car ownership is impractical. More importantly, they have grown up around two-wheeled transport. Compare this to Australia, where over the past four decades we have transitioned into the belief that motorcycles are a recreational product.

Industry observers in America worry about the future of Harley-Davidson, which is celebrating yet another amazing milestone of continuous production. This concern is based around what is believed to be its finite resource of ageing riders/buyers. Most of these pundits agree that H-D is a “luxury brand cleverly disguised as a blue-collar, working man’s brand”. For sure, relatively speaking, H-D occupies the same price bracket as high-end luxury cars.

This is precisely why its current management has hedged its bets for the future, hiving off its electric LiveWire platform as a standalone entity and engaged with several manufacturers of small-capacity motorcycles to develop an entry-level model.

Royal Enfield is also what marketing experts call a heritage brand. At the Bangkok launch of its Hunter 350, company heavyweights stressed RE was a “120-year-old start-up”. Compared to H-D, RE started from Ground Zero early in this new century. But it has cleverly balanced heritage brand value with the current expectations of young buyers.

At the other end of this evolving marketplace are brands such as KTM, which push the performance envelope in small-capacity motorcycles. Its 390 Duke and RC are just two examples of how to make sub-$10k, entry-level models relevant to Gen X and the Millennials.

Models like these, whether building on brand history or MotoGP glamour, have all the connectivity these younger riders want but Old School riders like me switch off. They also have full-factory warranties and roadside assistance.

This gets me thinking about my early years of motorcycling. Back in the early 1970s I couldn’t afford a brand new Norton Commando so I settled for a Triumph 3TA 350cc twin I bought off a broke uni student. It actually looked like a full-sized 650cc Triumph, so that was okay.

Unobtainable for sure. But it looked like the “real thing”, as Russell Morris used to crow in his hit song blasting out of the big-ass valve radio in the corner of our rental house.

I know a lot of Gen Xers and Millennials are into two wheels. Just look at the number of them riding around on high-end electric mountain bikes. These machines represent financially obtainable tech without the responsibility and cost of road registration and third-party insurance.

The motorcycle industry is slowly finding the wherewithal to develop strategies to get these people onto motorcycles.

Happy days are here again.

1
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1. Continuing the familirisation process with the R6 at the Sydney Motorsport Park test

2. Blanket finish in the 2021 Oceania Junior Cup, with Nelson (#29) the winner from Ryan Larkin (#68) and Cameron Swain

3. In the Supersport 300 support races at the 2022 Phillip Island WorldSBK round

4. In 2022 R3 Cup guise, where he finished the series just 3pt behind third-placed Taiyo Aksu

Photos: Rob Mott

REVOLVING RACER. WITH HAYDEN NELSON

“EVEN THE WRONG CHANGE IN SETTING STILL FEELS LIKE A POSITIVE STEP BECAUSE IT MEANS WE ARE LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE BIKE”

AFTER FOURTH place finishes in the 2022 Australian Supersport 300 Championship and R3 Cup, I’ve made the decision to step up to Supersport for 2023. But first, a little bit about me. I grew up around Taree in NSW, I’m in year 10 this year, and I started riding when I was about four years old. I was going to the local pre-school, and every afternoon I would come home and jump on my Pee Wee 50.

I started riding at Old Bar around the same time but couldn’t race until I was seven, which was on a 65cc bike on the oil track. I raced dirt track until I was 12 and then I jumped on a roadbike, starting with the Oceania Junior Cup and then Supersport 300. Off the bike, when I’m not at school, I work on the family farm looking after cattle. There is always something to fix and it helps fund my racing. It means when I’m not at school, I’m on the farm – then at night time we work hard on the bikes.

Mum and dad support me a lot, helping out at every round and towards the end of last year we purchased a Yamaha YZF-R6, mainly so I could get a feel for the different machine before the 2023 season. I’ve now got 10 hours on the bike and I feel like we have made good progress and learnt so much. On the R3 the optimum operating window is much wider than the R6 – with the Supersport bike we have to have the setup dialled in much more accurately.

So far I’ve taken the R6 to Queensland Raceway, the official ASBK Sydney Motorsport Park night test and also the Hartwell club round at Phillip Island. One setback was that our mechanic David Gow was unable to attend any of these tests because of illness. This meant mum, dad and I had to step up and learn a lot about how the bike works. Luckily we were able to have Dave on the phone for setup advice, plus there were lots of people at the track helping us out.

The larger bike felt great straight away and I love that it’s so powerful. Power doesn’t seem like a limiting factor now, whereas on the R3 that lack of power relative to my size meant slipstreaming played such a vital part.

Everything I can think of about the Supersport machine is just better. With that little bit of extra room I’m not cramping up on the bike and the dual brake discs at the front means the bike stops so well compared to the R3, resulting in a much higher corner-entry speed.

Trying to get traction at the rear has probably been the biggest challenge. During the initial tests I had a good feeling from both the front and rear, but as my lap times came down the positive front-end feel remained but the rear was sliding on corner exit the harder I pushed. We’re improving this every session, and even the wrong change in setting still feels like a positive step because it means we are learning more about the bike and how it works.

By the time everyone reads this, the first round of the 2023 ASBK season will be ready to begin. During the Hartwell club round I was able to race against the current champion John Lytras and other riders I already know, like Cameron Dunker and Jack Favelle. The standard was very high and the field this year is stacked with good riders. It gave me a feel for race craft on a Supersport machine and I’m feeling confident. Now the improvement has to come from myself. See you all at Phillip Island for the season opener!

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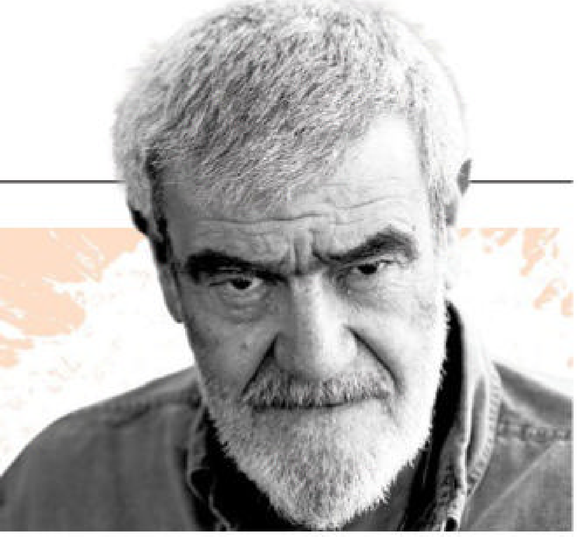


"A NON-FACTORY WORLD SUPERBIKE TEAM IS UNCOMFORTABLY FAR FROM THE STATUS A FORMER MOTO2 CHAMPION MIGHT EXPECT"

A ROOKIE'S LOT, to bowdlerise Gilbert and Sullivan, is not a happy one. Not as a rule, anyway, though there have been notable exceptions. Marc Marquez, for one, who romped to the title with six wins at his first attempt in 2013.

Last year was definitely a major downer for at least one of a heralded bumper crop of Moto2 graduates. The ill-starred Australian Remy Gardner lasted just one season before falling off the back of the bus, from championship winner to reject without ever having done very much wrong.

Remy had a best finish of 11th, just missing the top 10; and while this was well short of the best of the five rookies – Marco Bezzecchi had a podium at Assen – it compared perfectly well with the other four. Fabio Di Giannantonio had a single top 10, and was three places higher overall. But Remy's Tech3 KTM teammate (and defeated Moto2 rival) Raul Fernandez was only one point ahead, boasting a pair of 12th places; and Darren Binder one point behind.

Binder, an unexpected promotion direct from Moto3, was also dropped from the class, but to Moto2, so he is at least in the paddock for a second chance. Remy, son of redoubtable 1987 500 champion Wayne, was forced to join a non-factory World Superbike team. Which is uncomfortably far from the status a former Moto2 champion might expect, and unpleasantly out of the grand prix loop.

Unfair? Well, obviously yes. But another example of narrow margins in racing. On track, a matter of mere tenths can make all the difference to crucial qualifying and even race positions. In bike engineering likewise: there wasn't an awful lot wrong, for example, with last year's factory Honda, but it didn't win a single race

The same razor's edge can apply to a career.

Bezzecchi was retained by the Rossi-owned Ducati team for another attempt, and much is expected. He was outstanding in a first season including a pole and four top-five finishes. Compatriot Di Giannantonio stays on too, at the Gresini Ducati team, though if he doesn't start delivering results he is on shaky ground. The same applies to Raul, also dropped by KTM but picked up by Aprilia for its new satellite squad.

Bezzecchi easily won the unofficial Rookie of the Year title. For 2023, the prize is already allocated. Even if he doesn't score a single point, Augusto Fernandez will be the best rookie, for he is the only one. And since he is following directly in Gardner's footsteps – Moto2 champion taken into the KTM (now renamed GasGas) Tech3 satellite squad, he would be well advised to feel some trepidation. It is not historically a very secure position.

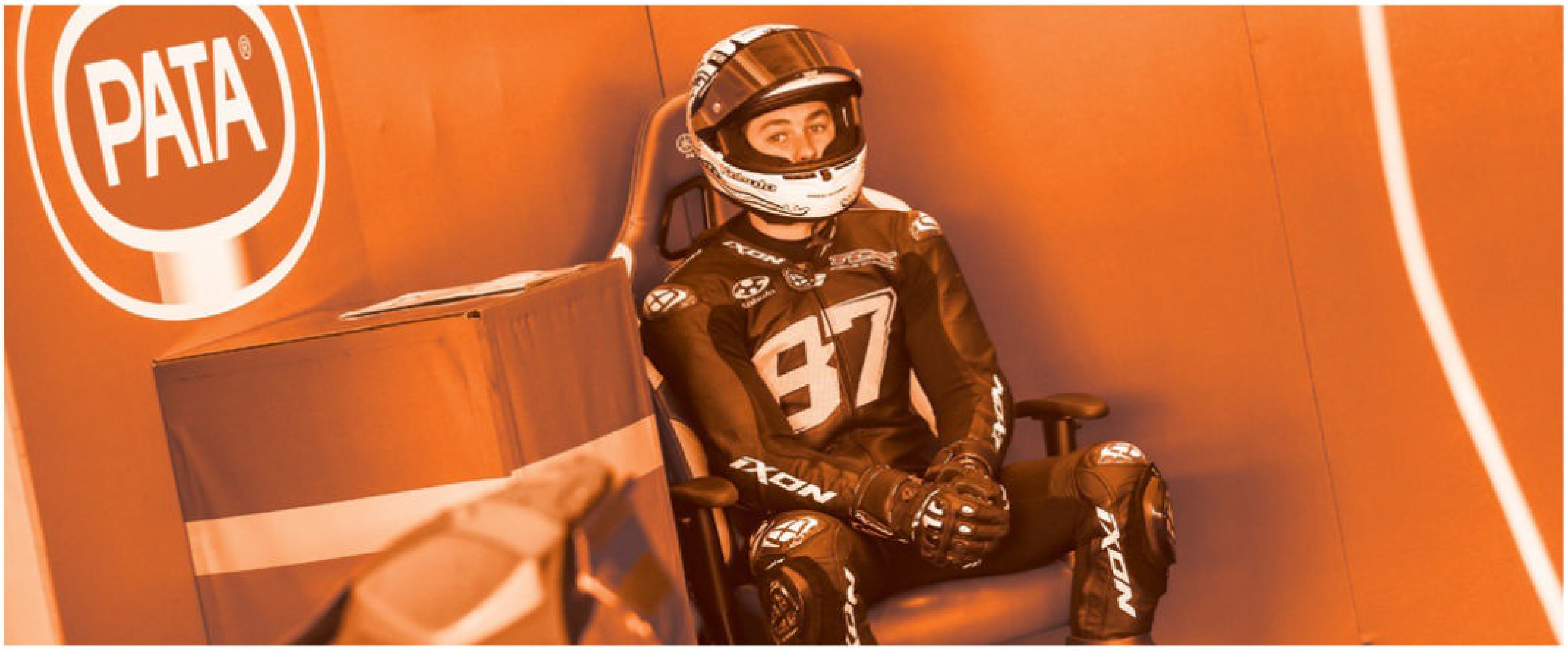
So far the second Fernandez in the class (no relation, by the way) has performed creditably enough, setting respectable if not blazingly fast times at the Sepang shakedown test that kicked action off for 2023, up among the faster test riders (full-timers other than rookies aren't allowed at these pre-test tests). As importantly, he didn't fall off, even in tricky conditions at the long and complex Sepang circuit.

The real acid test, for him and everybody else, took place at the same circuit later in the week... with a full complement of full-time riders, all with plenty to prove.

Now that Yamaha has gained enough speed to give Quartararo what he needs, can the next issue – speed on new tyres – be ironed out? Honda's new (ex-Suzuki) regime has seemingly been able to iron out some of the balance and traction problems that have bedevilled its riders for three seasons, and Marquez is in great nick, too.

Ducati's latest aerodynamic tickles appear to be more than enough to preserve its superiority; Aprilia appears to have made another solid jump from its 2022's great leap forward; and KTM may have found the key to consistency.

And the season's only rookie appeared not to get the shock of his life...



MOTOGP

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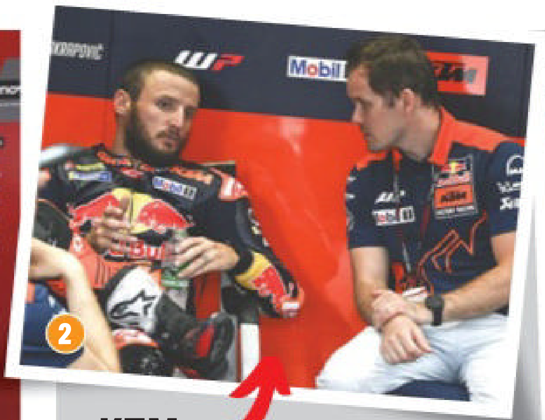

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REPORT **NEIL MORRISON** + PHOTOGRAPHY **GOLD&GOOSE**

GP23 STARTS HERE!

We assess the fortunes of MotoGP's five manufacturers after the year's first official test

DIFFERENT YEAR, but same old story? The first MotoGP test of the year at Sepang certainly suggested as much, as Ducati picked up from where it left off in November. The winner of last year's triple crown flexed its muscles in the blistering Malaysian heat, with Mooney VR46's Luca Marini leading reigning world champion Pecco Bagnaia (Lenovo Ducati) with a lap of 1m57.889s. More worryingly for its opponents, seven of the eight Ducati riders occupied the first nine places.

Meanwhile, Yamaha and Honda, always playing catch up to their Italian adversaries through 2022, couldn't match the speed of the Desmosedicis here. The 2021 world champ Fabio Quartararo (Monster Energy Yamaha) was a worrying 17th at the end of day three, while Marc Marquez (Repsol Honda) wore a face of resignation across all three days.

Both will be pinning hopes on next month's two-day outing at Portimao being the scene of an all-important last-minute turnaround.

KTM

The big unknown of the three days. If the timesheets were the only thing to be considered, it could be assumed KTM is in a world of trouble. Brad Binder was 14th, new signing Jack Miller 18th. But neither rider was overly fazed, and pointed to the substantial testing work that was completed as reason to be positive.

Both riders, plus satellite man Pol Espargaro, worked their way through testing two engines as well as two aero packages across the three days, plus myriad other parts. Fine tuning little details was still some way off.

"It was purely trying things to get as much information as possible," said Binder. "We're now getting it narrowed down to what our package will look like." Finding speed on corner exit remains a priority.

On the other side of the garage, Miller admitted "we hit a wall a bit" on day three. "I'm just suffering mid-corner, with corner speed and getting the thing off the corner."

DUCATI

A test from the heavens for Bologna bosses. Learning from its mistakes of 2022, Ducati engineers opted against radical changes to a bike that ended its 15-year wait for the MotoGP title. Factory riders Pecco Bagnaia and Enea Bastianini, as well as Pramac's Jorge Martin and Johann Zarco, were relieved to find the GP23 is a small evolution on last year's model.

Development work was split across the four men, with a new engine deemed a success from the off. Martin, who topped day two, said he's already "ready to race." Plus, he could make fast lap times when riding "smoothly, I don't have to be aggressive to be fast". The only area of mild concern? According to Bagnaia, it was "the handling, the '23 bike is more aggressive and more nervous. This is something that we can focus on in Portimao".

Otherwise, Ducati is miles ahead of where it found itself this time a year ago.

"From the first exit with the new bike, I felt great," said the reigning champion, who feels the 2023 bike is already at the level of its predecessor, with more still to come. Even riders from Mooney VR46 and Gresini Ducati, riding year old GP22s, look capable of getting in on the act.

1. Bagnaia "felt great" on the Ducati GP23 from the outset, and completed the test in second position **2.** Miller's first major hitout on the KTM was productive, although he "hit a wall" on day three with mid-corner speed and exit **3.** Vinales was third overall on the improved Aprilia - and the 2023 engine is still to come! **4.** Marquez's Achilles heel still remains a lack of corner exit drive **5.** Quartararo's Yamaha now has some top speed clout, but he's struggling with one-lap pace

4

HONDA

There was no dressing up how disastrous 2022 was for Honda. Marz Marquez and new teammate Joan Mir were, therefore, entitled to expect big changes here. Both were disappointed.

HRC brought a new engine, which had a higher top speed than what it used in '22. But the RC213V's major deficits remain, with Marquez complaining he still feels far from comfortable when braking to enter the corner. And they remain miles off Ducati on corner exit.

"More than the front I'm looking for the connection with the gas on the exit of the corner," Marquez said.

There were some puzzling aspects of Honda's approach to the three-day Sepang test. Like, why were Marquez and test rider Stefan Bradl riding at one point on Sunday without wings? Plus, an 'experimental' third bike featured some old components, like the swingarm. If HRC was looking backward for solutions, it suggested there may still be some confusion at how to get ahead.

Positives included new technical manager Ken Kawauchi, formerly of Suzuki, bringing a better organisation to affairs than before. Marquez also spoke of his physical condition being greatly improved compared to the previous five preseasons. But Honda appears as far from the top as it was in the autumn of last year. Big improvements are drastically required, and in a hurry.

YAMAHA

Up until the final hour of the final day, things were looking rosy for Yamaha. Firstly, Fabio Quartararo had plenty to test, including two new engines, new aero packages, a new chassis and swingarm - a far cry from this time a year ago, when the YZR-M1 was unchanged. This was a new experience for the Frenchman, whose testing and development capabilities are still relatively unproven.

Second, the bike's huge deficiency last year - a lack of top speed - was addressed with the Frenchman third-fastest through the speed traps on day two when riding alone. "We made a massive improvement," he said at the close of day two.

But the final two hours of Sunday brought the Iwata factory down to earth. As both riders fitted new tyres and pushed for a headline lap time, Quartararo was dismayed a sizeable improvement wasn't forthcoming.

"If I don't see the lap time, I feel I'm riding in low 58s. But then I look at the last time and I'm low 59s. It's not that I'm losing the front everywhere or I have no grip. I don't know what is going on." Even if pace on used tyres was strong, Yamaha has a month to remedy this worrying trend.

3

APRILIA

Having made major steps forward with radical changes to its RS-GP in each of the three previous years, Aprilia's fine 2022 meant only small evolutions were needed this winter. Aleix Espargaro was almost bummed out by this on day one.

"I thought we'd have more to test," he shrugged. But in reality, this showed the RS-GP is in need of only small tweaks. All aspects of performance were touched in a minor way.

"The '23 bike is definitely better than the '22," said Espargaro, sixth fastest overall. "The cooling is much better. We have some more revs, the bike is a bit faster on the straight and it's narrower, which makes it easier to change direction. With the new aero the bike turns better. In general, we made a very small step forward in all areas."

Teammate Maverick Viñales was third fastest. And with another updated package and the full '23 engine still to come at next month's Portimao test, there's no reason to fear the Noale factory's brilliant 2022 was a flash in the pan.

5

1. Jones, the defending ASBK champion **2.** Stauffer was seventh in the test session at Sydney Motorsport Park **3.** Waters begins his quest for a fourth ASBK title **4.** Mark Chiodo was also at the test with plans to ride in Australia and Great Britain this year

ASBK

①

ASBK HEATS UP

Sydney two-day test sets the scene for 2023 ASBK clash

THE 2023 Australian Superbike Championship kicks off in conjunction with the opening round of the Superbike World Championship at Phillip Island over 24-26 February, with Josh Waters firming himself as an early title favourite. On the McMartin Racing Ducati V4 R, the three-time Aussie champ has posted convincing results at both the St George Summer Night Series and the official ASBK test – both held at Sydney Motorsport Park.

Waters topped the official test with a lap of 1m 29.570s, beating the Yamaha Racing Team duo of Cru Halliday and 2022 champ Mike Jones. Penrite Honda Racing's Troy Herfoss put himself back in the title conversation with fourth quickest, followed by the Desmosport Ducati of Broc Pearson. Sixth fastest was Lachlan Epis (Evolution Sports Group BMW), who has confirmed he will race both ASBK and the Asia Road Racing Championship this year (Grid Talk, p126).

Max Stauffer (GTR Motostars Yamaha) impressed under the SMSP lights at the St George series and the official test, clocking the seventh-fastest time ahead of Europe-bound Senna Agius. Ted Collins (Livson Racing BMW) finished ninth in his ASBK return, with Arthur Sissis rounding out the top 10.

Herfoss, Pearson and Collins all contested the Hartwell club round at Phillip Island over 4-5 February, with Bryan Staring also present for MotoGo Yamaha, taking the seat of Anthony West. Staring has confirmed he will be riding the MotoGo entry this season, while three-time champion Glenn Allerton is still unsure if he will piece together a deal in time to make the grid.

Daniel Falzon has also confirmed his privately run team will not be competing, citing in part concerns that a control MoTeC ECU was not adopted for the 2023 season.

MATT O'CONNELL

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5. Waters' Ducati V4 R was fastest at the test **6.** Halliday was in great touch on the YZF-R1 **7.** Sissis **8.** Herfoss was fourth fastest, and building nicely **9.** Abbie Cameron is making the step from OJC to Supersport 300 **10.** Martin is heading to Europe in 2023 **11.** Moylan is also Australian 300 Supersport bound **12.** McAdam has his sights on the 2023 Oceania Junior Cup **13.** Howe (#21), Houlihan (#23) and Alguhuneim (#5)

JUNIORS

FUTURE STARS FROM THE WEST

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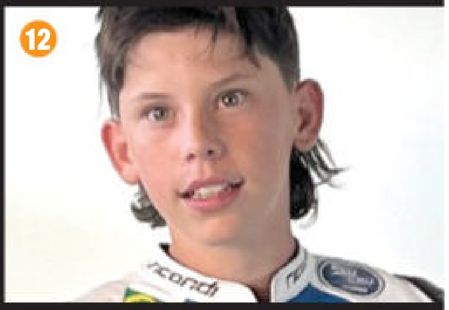
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A HANDFUL of Western Australia's brightest road-racing prospects will be spending a bit more time away from home in 2023 as they seek to realise their racing ambitions. Jayden Martin, Calvin Moylan, Rossi McAdam and Abbie Cameron are all taking new steps in their road-racing careers in 2023.

Martin is headed to Europe to contest the Yamaha Blu Cru R3 European Cup, both Moylan and Cameron will be lining up in the Supersport 300 championship alongside the ASBK rounds, while 13-year-old McAdam is one of 11 riders selected to battle it out for the 2023 Oceania Junior Cup (OJC).

Having attended the recent two-day test at Sydney Motorsport Park (SMSP), Moylan will make his interstate race debut in the opening round at Phillip Island riding a Kawasaki Ninja 400 as part of the four-rider Race-DNA squad.

It will be 16-year-old Cameron's second season on the eastern seaboard after contesting (and finishing) every race of the 2022 OJC. As well as being the first West Aussie to complete an entire OJC season, she's the first female rider to see a OJC season through and will be the first female to make the step from OJC to Supersport 300.

Not short on talent, Cameron raced the 2021 and 2022 Terra Territory Challenge (TTC) where she won the junior class both times, as well as the under 500cc class. In the test at SMSP she consistently nudged the top-10. She'll race the first two rounds of the SSP300, as well as rounds five and six. She will also contest the WA state titles and will make the trip to Darwin for the TTC.

JOHN INNES

RALLY

13

BEST OF THE VETS

AFTER A year of surgery, 53-year-old Aussie Andrew Houlihan has won the opening round of BAJA World Cup's veterans' class.

Held on the Iberian Peninsula and riding a Husqvarna RFR450 prepped by Mishal Agihuneim at the Saudi Dirt Bike Centre, the cup is a series of two-day sprints over the type of terrain encountered in the Dakar - mostly sand dunes. Sixth in the prologue saw Houlihan start second on the first leg and he soon found himself leading, suffering an inevitable navigational mistake and then exhaustion after pushing too hard attempting to make up time.

"I can ride 600km a day on our sandiest tracks back home," he said. "But after 250km of the Saudi desert I'm completely knackered!"

A mid-pack start position the following day made navigation a little less stressful, and after some forceful riding - at over 150km/h in some sections - Andrew finished sixth outright. He's now leading the 2023 Veterans Baja World Cup ahead of Great Britain's Barry Howe.

PETER WHITAKER

BRIEFS

VALE DON MORRIS

VETERAN SPEEDWAY sidecar passenger Don Morris has died after a crash at the Lake Liddell Speedbowl track on 20 January. Morris was passenger on a bike ridden by Darren Cafe in a practice session. Cafe was transported to hospital with leg injuries. PB

HILLCLIMB HORROR

TWO SEPARATE crashes during the New Zealand Hillclimb Champs have landed five people in hospital, one in a critical condition. Held in Southland's Bluff as part of the annual Burt Munro Challenge, the first incident occurred just after 11am, with the second occurring a few hours later. Spectators were removed from the hill after the second incident, and racing continued. Organisers said it was the 16th time the event had been run, and the first to record such incidents.

KEL BUCKLEY

SPEEDWAY

SLIDEWAYS!

SOME SIGNIFICANT solo speedway meetings have been held across the country after the conclusion of the Australian Championship series.

Former world champion Tai Woffinden topped a classy field to win the Darcy Ward Invitational meeting staged at North Brisbane beating Ryan Douglas, Max Fricke and Rohan Tungate in the final.

Cameron Heeps won his fifth Western Australian Championship at Pinjar Park, scoring maximum points to top Matt Marson, Luke Killeen and Daniel Winchester in the final. In the Junior 250cc class, Mitch McDiarmid added his home state title to the Australian Championship he won back in November. Rory Schlein then won his fifth South Australian Championship by beating young guns Jake Turner, Jack Morrison and Michael West in the final at Gillman. Amazingly Schlein's four previous victories had come in consecutive years, but the latest of them was back in 2007.

The Rob Woffinden Classic at Pinjar Park is a meeting staged in honour of Tai's late father who played a huge role in establishing the track. But there was little joy for Tai in the six-rider final, where Mildura duo Justin Sedgmen and Jaimon Lidsey led home Woffinden who was followed by Ryan Douglas, Luke Killeen and Cooper Riordan.

The return of action at Mildura's Olympic Park Speedway will add two annual classic meetings to the calendar this month; the Phil Crump Solo Classic and the Jason Lyons Solo Trophy. Stay tuned.

PETER BAKER

INTERVIEW **MATT O'CONNELL** + PHOTOGRAPHY **ROB MOTT**

LACHLAN EPIS

We catch up with the 23-year-old as he prepares to race in two domestic championships in 2023

Tell us about your plans for 2023. We've heard you'll be competing in the Asian Road Racing Championship (ARRC) this year. Is that going ahead?
Yes, that's right, the plan is to race in Asia this year on a BMW Superbike, but also compete in ASBK. I had a little bit of difficulty last year in ASBK, and I guess I fell out of love with the sport a bit – then this opportunity in Asia popped up. It's something we've been wanting to do for a couple of years now. We tested the ARRC control Dunlop tyres at the Sydney night test and that was really positive. We're still going to do as many rounds as we can here in ASBK, as well as the full season of ARRC. Asia is pretty much a fly-in-fly-out scenario. It's only six rounds across the year and that's probably not enough to stay sharp, so that's why I will be doing as many ASBK rounds as I can. Two rounds clash, however, including SMSP (Sydney Motorsport Park) – which is a bit unfortunate, as it's my home round.

So it's a BMW M 1000 RR for both series. What's the difference in specification of the bikes you will be riding?
Here in ASBK we don't have the 2023 M 1000 RR homologated – we just don't have enough bikes in Australia yet to homologate them. In the Asia series I will be riding the brand-new 2023 model that has an updated aero package and some engine changes. Electronically, the bikes are pretty much the same, although the engine specification is slightly different. The rules in Australia lean more towards 'Superstock' whereas Asia is more 'Superbike'.

What about the make-up of the team? How will that work?
I'm taking my Australian team over with me – so I'll be riding for the same team in Australia as I will in the ARRC. We fly the bikes from here to Thailand for the first round and then the ARRC look after the bikes – they provide us with a 20-foot shipping container and at the end of the round we put all our equipment in there and it's transported to the next circuit. All the maintenance is carried out at the track; you don't get the bike in between rounds.

1. Pre-season testing in 2022 on the M 1000 RR **2.** At the Catalunya WorldSBK round in 2021 **3.** Epis was the youngest ever rider to compete in WorldSSP full-time back in 2016
4. The 2023 preparations recently began at Sydney Motorsport Park **5.** Leading the ASBK race at Morgan Park in 2022 **6.** At full lean in the 2020 Jerez WorldSBK round
7. At Wakefield Park in 2020 **8.** A wily veteran of a number of paddocks, and still only 23...

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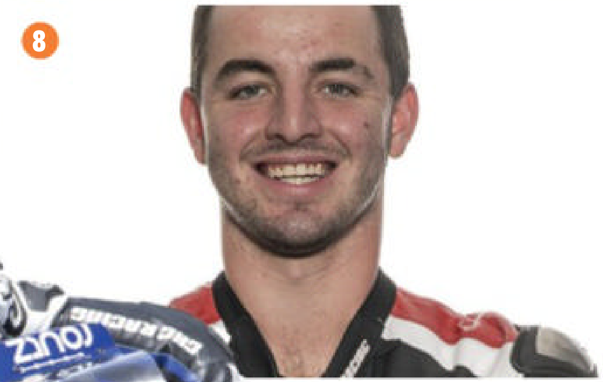
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You've made some progress in the last two years particularly, regularly qualifying in the top five but also some DNFs – is it fair to say race results have let you down a little in recent times?
The 2022 season was one of those years where the pace was there, the team gave me a great bike but for one reason or another, I just couldn't get the job done. I made some mistakes but I also had to get surgery on my forearm for arm pump. We had a few decisions by officials not go our way – but over the course of the year I think we showed that we had strong pace even if we didn't get to show that on a Sunday. The thing I'm really looking for this year is 'getting it done' on race day, showing I have the speed to be considered one of the best here in Australia on a Superbike.

MY CAREER HASN'T TAKEN THE TRADITIONAL ROUTE – I LEFT FOR EUROPE FAIRLY YOUNG

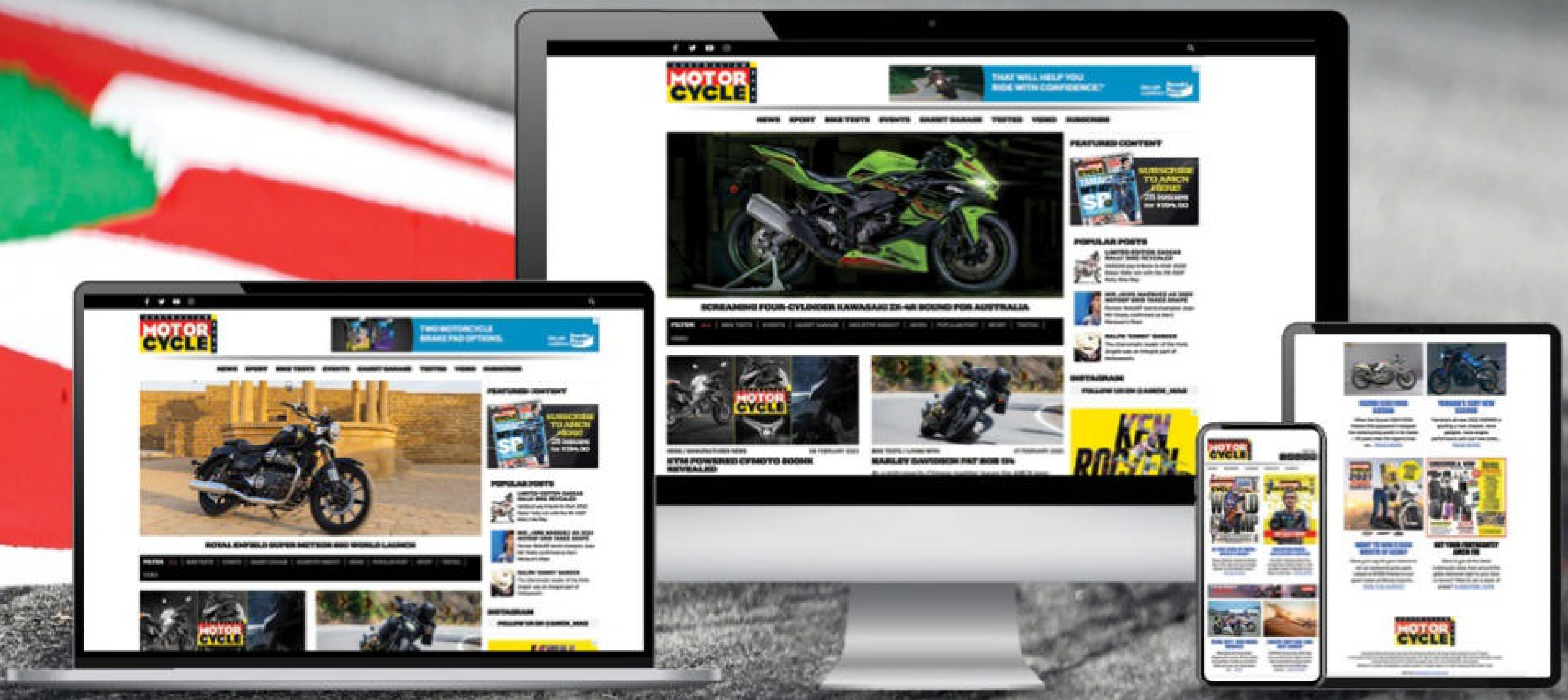
How about your relationship with some of the senior riders? Has that thawed at all?
Definitely, there can be a bit of friction with some of the established guys. My career hasn't taken the traditional route – I left for Europe fairly young but I feel like I've had to work hard to be considered worthy of being on the ASBK grid. Some people probably don't like me and there have been some comments in the media over the last 12 months that just motivate me to prove people wrong. I get along with most of the guys now, but if someone has some words that aren't too kind, you've just got to rub it off and move on.

Wayne Maxwell had some choice words at Morgan Park last year. Will Morgan Park be the "one and only time that Lachlan Epis leads a Superbike race"?
(laughs) I'm looking forward to making Wayne (Maxwell) eat those words this year! Now he's retired so I'll never get the chance to shove one back up the inside of him. He is the kind of guy that can say something like that but still come up and shake your hand afterwards.

What about goals for this year?
I believe I am capable of fighting for an ARRC championship. There are some big names this year like Markus Reiterberger on a BMW. I know most of the tracks. I'm fortunate with my World Superbike experience that I know some of the tracks we're racing on. I've competed at Sepang and in Thailand. I've never been to Mandalika or Sugo – but knowing half the tracks is a good head start. I'm excited, I wouldn't be doing it if I didn't think I could go out and win.

AUSTRALIAN MOTOR CYCLE NEWS SINCE 1951

KEEP UP!



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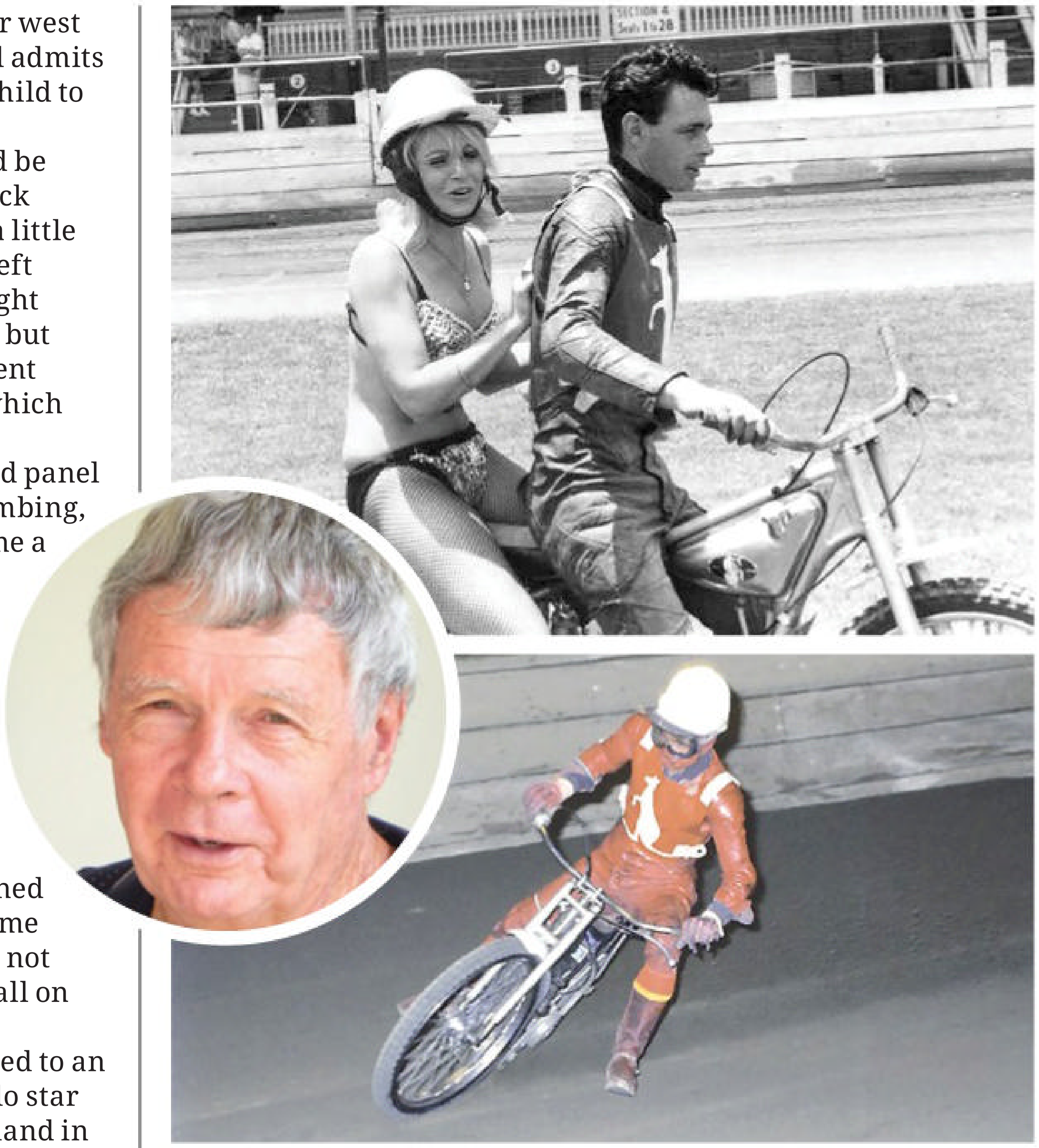
GREG KENTWELL THE SYDNEYSIDER WHO GREW DEVOTED TO THE DOLOMITE

"I DID SOME PLUMBING FOR A FORMER SPEEDWAY RIDER WHO SLUNG ME A SET OF OLD LEATHERS FROM HIS CHOOK SHED"



Top: Speedway glitz, 1960s style...

Above: After painting his leathers red, Greg started to rake in appearance money

BORN IN Sydney's inner west in 1942, Greg Kentwell admits he wasn't the easiest child to be around.

"These days it would be called ADD, though back then I was just called a little bugger," he grins. He left school thinking he might take up panel beating, but vocational guidance sent him house painting, which he hated.

"I went back and said panel beating, they said plumbing, so I gave up and became a plumber."

In the meantime Greg had fallen in love with speedway and conned a few unofficial practice laps in a speedcar at Cumberland Oval before being warned off. By the time he turned 17, he was back, this time with his own bike and not disgracing himself at all on the Sydney scene.

He quickly progressed to an A-grader and when solo star Jim Airey went to England in 1964, Greg purchased Jim's championship-winning ESO. At the same time Greg was still taking the occasional speedcar drive whenever offered a seat.

"I liked the solos," muses Greg, "but I was always a speedway bloke, not a motorcycle bloke – there's a big difference. My old mate Jim Airey is a motorcycle man, but I was only ever interested in speedway.

"I was a penniless apprentice when I did some plumbing for a former speedway rider who slung me a set of old leathers from his chook shed. With my new/old leathers cleaned of chicken shit, I did a couple of trips to Rowley Park in Adelaide with Ray Kent who – because of the colour of his leathers – was promoted as the 'Silver Streak'. Ray suggested I might be able to scrounge a little travel money if I painted my leathers red. So, armed with a vacuum cleaner as a spray gun and some red leather paint, I became worthy of enough appearance money to cover most of the costs."

This was only because Greg shared those costs with Peter Cunneen, a Sydney-based speedcar driver and regular Rowley Park competitor.

"We'd pack up after work on Thursday night and drive to Adelaide to race on Friday night," recalls Greg. "The last event was always the speedcar feature, so I'd shower while that was on. By the time Peter had finished we'd run the car straight on to the trailer and I'd strap everything down while Peter had his shower. If we had a good run back we'd be at Sydney Showground by three o'clock on Saturday. A bad run meant we wouldn't get there until 5.30pm and have to get past the spectator queues for me to get to the grid on time."

Win or lose, for the best part of two seasons Greg and Peter followed the same ritual which, in Greg's case, meant a 30-hour return road trip for less than 10 minutes track time and, after petrol costs, barely enough to pay for a new rear tyre.

"Peter had a Dodge Custom Royal V8," says Greg. "We'd cruise at around the ton (160km/h) with the trailer on. Our only real worry was the thought of hitting a kangaroo."

Greg travelled to England in February 1966 to become a professional first division rider for the Halifax Dukes. Back in Australia over the summer of 1967-68 for the Test Series against the British Lions, Greg scored a career best with six wins from six rides at the Speedway Royale.

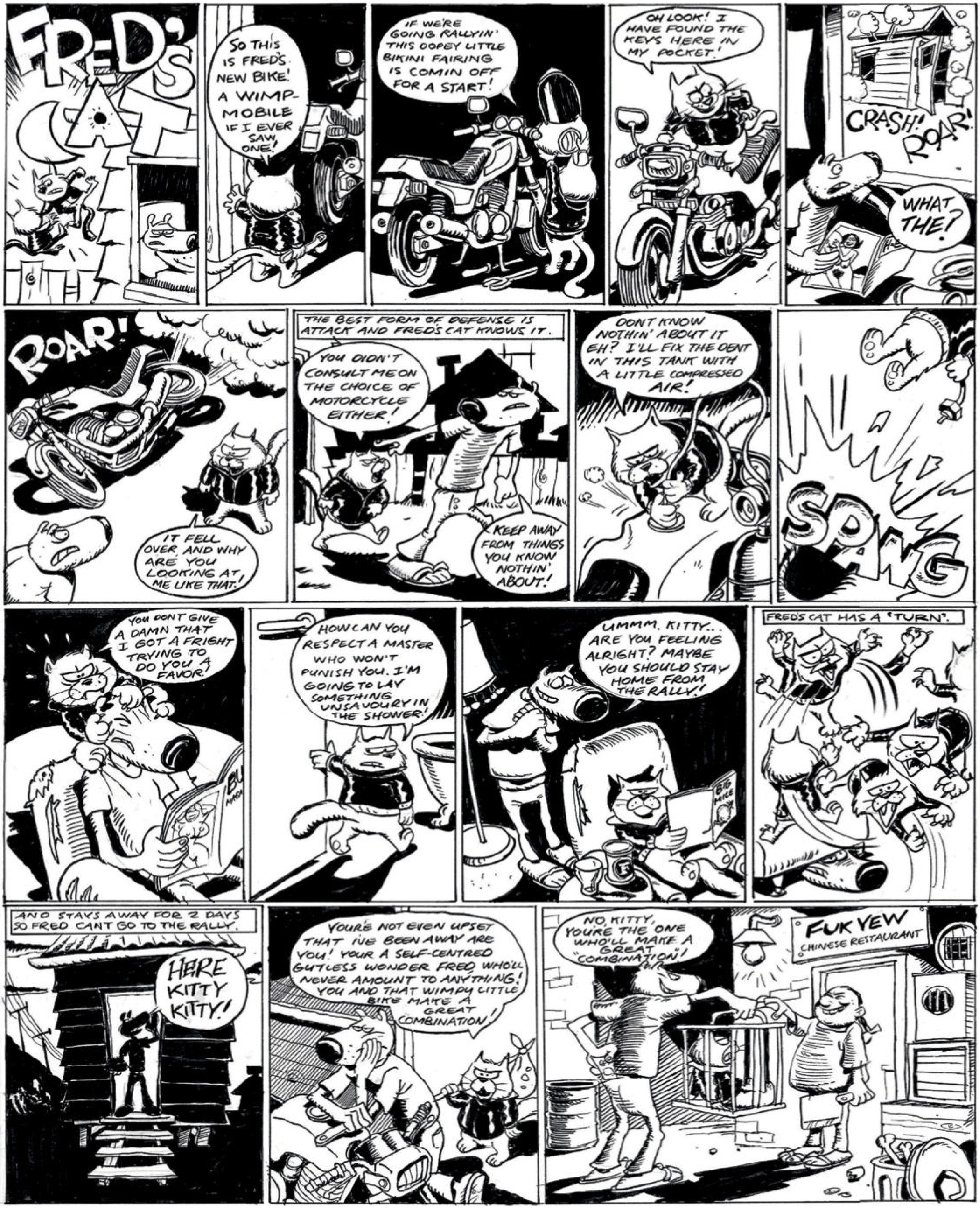
Despite numerous broken bones, including a fractured skull, Greg says he's fully enjoyed his life in speedway.

"I've raced all over Australia and the UK, as well as New Zealand, Costa Mesa in the USA, and even the Philippines where, in 1976, I called it quits on my solo career."

He soon became involved with importing and leasing Formula Fords, even having a play himself, but he was soon back on the dolomite in a vintage Offenhauser he'd imported from the USA. By the mid-1980s, Greg had acquired a dredging business maintaining hundreds of Canal Estates on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. He sold the business when he moved south to the Gold Coast a few years back.

Greg is still active in the Formula Ford business, which now includes maintenance of a pair of Formula 5000 open wheelers, but it's not until mention of Reid McKay's speedcar residing in Greg's Yatala workshop that Greg sparks up. Reid will be back on the dolomite very soon – and Greg will be right there until the lights go out.

PETER WHITAKER


FRED'S CAT
SO THIS IS FRED'S NEW BIKE! A WIMP-MOBILE IF I EVER SAW ONE!
IF WE'RE GOING RALLYIN' THIS DOPEY LITTLE BIKINI FAIRING IS COMIN OFF FOR A START!
OH LOOK! I HAVE FOUND THE KEYS HERE IN MY POCKET!
CRASH! ROAR!
WHAT THE?
ROAR!
IT FELL OVER AND WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT!
THE BEST FORM OF DEFENSE IS ATTACK AND FRED'S CAT KNOWS IT.
YOU DIDN'T CONSULT ME ON THE CHOICE OF MOTORCYCLE EITHER!
KEEP AWAY FROM THINGS YOU KNOW NOTHIN' ABOUT!
DONT KNOW NOTHIN' ABOUT IT EH? I'LL FIX THE DENT IN THIS TANK WITH A LITTLE COMPRESSED AIR!
SPANG
YOU DONT GIVE A DAMN THAT I GOT A FRIGHT TRYING TO DO YOU A FAVOR!
HOW CAN YOU RESPECT A MASTER WHO WON'T PUNISH YOU. I'M GOING TO LAY SOMETHING UNSAVOURY IN THE SHOWER!
UMMM, KITTY... ARE YOU FEELING ALRIGHT? MAYBE YOU SHOULD STAY HOME FROM THE RALLY!
FRED'S CAT HAS A 'TURN'.
AND STAYS AWAY FOR 2 DAYS SO FRED CANT GO TO THE RALLY.
HERE KITTY KITTY!
YOUR'E NOT EVEN UPSET THAT I'VE BEEN AWAY ARE YOU! YOUR A SELF-CENTRED GUTLESS WONDER FRED WHO'LL NEVER AMOUNT TO ANYTHING! YOU AND THAT WIMPY LITTLE BIKE MAKE A GREAT COMBINATION!
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Australian Motorcycle News road test photographs are posed for by skilled, professional riders under controlled circumstances. Attempting to imitate their actions may be dangerous. Australian Motorcycle News supports and endorses rider training and wearing protective riding gear... but not destroying a golf buggy at the Sugo round of the world Superbike title in the early 1990s and then blaming Carl Fogarty, hey Rob Phillis?

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